Additions to the Saints everlasting Rest, to be put before the Second Part.

The Preface, directed 1. To Unbelievers, and Anti-Scripturists, 2. To Papists, 3. And to the Orthodox.

Because it is a point of such high concernment, to be assured of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures; and all men be not of one mind in the way of proving it, and because I have not handled this so fully as the difficulty and weight of the subject doth require, as intending only a few Arguments by way of Digression, for the strengthening of weaker & less exercised Christians. I have thought meet therefore a little more fully to express my mind in this Preface, being loath to stand to enlarge the book any further. And that which I have to say, is to three sorts of Persons distinctly.

The first is, all those that Believe not the Truth of the Scriptures. Open Pagans live not among us: But Pagans professing Christianity are of late too common; under the name of Libertines, Familists, Seekers, and Anti-Scripturists. Had I not known it by experience, and had conference with such, I should not speak it. And there is a remnant of Paganism and Infidelity in the best of Christians. The chief causes which pervert the understandings of men in this point, in my observation, are these two. 1. *When men have deeply wounded their Consciences by sinning against Knowledge, and given the Victory to their fleshly lusts, so that they must either deeply accuse and con-*

demn themselves, or deny the Scriptures, they choose that which seemeth the more tolerable and desirable to them; and so rather condemn the Scripture then themselves. And what malefactor would not do the like, and except against the Law which doth condemn him, if that would serve his turn? And when men that are engaged in a sinfull course, do see that the Word of God doth speak so terribly against it, they dare not live in that sin while they believe the Scripture, because it is still wakening and galling their guilty Consciences: But when they have cast away their belief of the Scriptures, then Conscience will let them sin with more quietness. These men Believe not the Scriptures; principally because they would not have them to be true, rather then because they do indeed seem untrue: For their Fleshly concupiscence having mastered their Wils, their Wils have also mastered their understandings: and so as in a well ordered gracious soul all goes strait forward; in these men all is perverted and moves backward. These men refuse their Physick, because it is unpleasant, and not because it is unwholsome; yet at last their appetite so mastereth their Reason, that they will not believe any thing can be wholsome which goes so much against their stomacks. At least this makes them the readyer to pick a quarrell with it, and they are glad to hear of any Argument against it. Ahab believed not the message of Micheah, not because he spoke falsly, but because he spoke not Good of him, but Evil. Men will easily be drawn to Believe that to be True which they would fain have to be True; and that to be False, which they desire should be False. But alas, how short and silly a cure is this for a guilty soul! And how soon will it leave them in uncurable misery!

2. Another Reason of these mens Unbelief, is the seeming contradictions that they find in the Scriptures, and the seeming impossibilities in the Doctrine of them, which so far transcend the capacity of man. To the former let me say this much. 1. It is meerly through our ignorance that Scriptures seem contradictory: I thought my self once that some places were hardly reconcileable, which now I see do very plainly agree: Plainly, I say, to them that understand the true meaning of the Words. There are no humane writings but lie open to such exceptions of the Ignorant. It is rather a Wonder that the Scriptures seem not to you more self-contradicting, if you consider, but 1. That they are written in another language, and must needs loose much in the Translation; there being few words to be found in any language, which have not divers significations. 2. That it being the language also of another

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Countrey to men that know not the customs, the ſcituation of places, the proverbial ſpeeches and phraſes of that Countrey, it is impoſſible but many words ſhould ſeem dark or contradictory. 3. *Alſo that the Scriptures are of ſo exceeding Antiquity, as no books elſe in the World are like them. Now who knows not that in all Countries in the World cuſtoms alter, and proverbiall ſpeeches and phraſes alter? which muſt needs make words ſeem dark even to men of the ſame Countrey and Langnage that live ſo long after. We have many Engliſh Proverbs, which if in after Ages they ſhould ceaſe to be Proverbs, and men finding them in our writings ſhall conſtrue them, as plain ſpeeches, they will ſeem to be either falſe, or ridiculous non-ſence. The like may be ſaid of alterations of Phraſes. He that reads but* Chaucer, *much more elder Writers, will ſee that Engliſh is ſcarce the ſame thing now as it was then. Though the ſacred Languages have had no ſuch great alterations, yet by this it may appear that it is no wonder, if to the ignorant they ſeem contradictory or difficult. Do not the Mathematicks, and all Sciences ſeem full of contradictions and impoſſibilities to the Ignorant? which are all reſolved and cleared to thoſe that underſtand them? It is a very fooliſh audacious thing that every novice or young ſtudent in Divinity, ſhould expect to have all difficulties reſolved preſently, or elſe they will cenſure the Scriptures, and ſpeak evil of the things they know not, inſtead of cenſuring themſelves: When yet theſe men know that in the eaſieſt Science, yea, or baſeſt Manufacture, they muſt have time to learn the Reaſons of them. It is uſual with raw Scholars in all kind of ſtudies, to ſay as* Nicodemus *at firſt did of Regeneration, How can theſe things be?* * *Me thinks ſuch frail and ſhallow Creatures, as all men are, ſhould rather be ſo ſenſible of their own incapacity and ignorance, as to be readyer to take the blame to themſelves, then to quarrel with the Truth. It is too large a work for me here to anſwer all the particular objections of theſe men againſt the ſeveral paſſages of Scripture: but if they would be at the pains to enquire of their Teachers, or ſtudy what is written to that end, they might find that the matter is not ſo difficult as they imagine. Beſides what* Althamer, Cumeranus, Sharpius *and others have purpoſely written for reconciling the ſeeming contradictions in Scripture, they may find much in ordinary Expoſitors.* Junius *anſwereth two and*

* *Sed quemadmodum apud eos qui ſemel providentiam probe pereeperunt, non minuitur, aut perit fides providentiæ ob ea quæ non comprehenduntur; ita neq; ſcripturæ Divinitati per eam totam diffuſæ quidquam detrahitur, ex eo quod ad ſingulas dictiones imbecillitas noſtra non poſsit adeſſe arcano ſplendori doctrinæ qui in tenui & contempta locutione delitescit.* Origen. Philocali (*per Tarinum Græcolat. Edit.*) pag. (*mihi*) 12. 13.

twenty Cavils which Simplicius the Pagan raised, and after him the Antinomians used against Moses History of the Creation. And he was fit for the work, having for a years time continued in the desperate Error of Atheism himself. But the fullest Confutation of these Blasphemous conceits, are in the primitive Fathers (as Origen against Celsus, Tertul. Athanas. &c) where they shall find that the worst of Pagans brought forth these Monsters, and by what weapons they were destroyed.

2. And what if you could not see how to reconcile the seeming contradictions of Scripture! When you see Arguments sufficient to prove them to be the Word of God (which I doubt not but you may see, if you will search impartially and humbly) me thinks common reason might then conclude, that all that God speaks must needs be true: though our blindness hinder us from a distinct discerning it! 2. The like I say of the seeming Impossibilities in Scripture. Is any thing too hard for Omnipotency it self? This Atheist derides it when he hears of the opening of the Red Sea, of the standing still of the Sun, &c. But dost thou believe that there is a God? If thou do, thou must needs know that he is Almighty: If not, thou hast put out the eye of Reason; For most Pagans in the world have acknowledged a God. Canst thou think that all the things thou seest, are made and preserved without a first Cause? Do the Heavens keep their courses, and the Earth produce that variety of beautifull Creatures, and the death of one, cause the Life of the other, and all kept in that order of superiority and inferiority, and all this without a first Cause? If thou say that Nature is the cause: I would fain know what it is that thou calleſt Nature? Either a Reasonable Being and Cause, or an unreasonable. If unreasonable, it could not produce the Reasonable spirits, as are Angels and the Souls of men, for these would be more Noble then it self: If Reasonable, is it not then God himself which thou dost call by the name of Nature? To be the first Reason, Being and Cause of all, is to be God. And then let me ask thee: Dost thou not see as great Works as these Miracles every day and hour before thine eyes? Is it not as great a work for the Sun to move, as to stand still? to move 1038442. miles an hour, being $166\frac{1}{8}$ times bigger then all the Earth? Is it not as hard a matter for the Sea to move and keep his times in ebbing and flowing, as for it to open and stand still? It is only the rarity and strangeness that makes us think one Impossible, when we see the other daily come to pass. If it were but usual for the Sun to stand still, every man would think it a

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far more incredible thing that it ſhould move, and ſo move? Why then cannot God do the leſſer, who daily doth the greater? The like I might ſay of all the reſt, but that it were too long to inſiſt on them. And for the truth of the Hiſtory, it is proved afterwards.

2. *I would further ask theſe men, Muſt not a ſoul that is capable of Immortall Happineſs, have ſome guide in the way thereto? If they ſay, No: then they either think God unfaithfull or unskilfull, who having appointed man an End, hath not given him direction thereto in the Means. If they doubt whether mans ſoul be Immortall, and whether there be a Life of Happineſs to ſome, and Miſery to others to be expected after this, I have ſaid enough againſt that doubt in this book following. And further let me ask them,* * *How comes it to be the Common judgement of all Nations, even the moſt ignorant Indians, that there is a Life after this, where the Good and the Bad ſhall be differently recompenced. This the ancient Barbarians believed as* Herodotus *teſtifieth of the* Getæ. lib. 4. *and of the Egyptians* Diodorus Siculus lib. 1. biblioth. num. 93. *The very Inhabitants of* Guiny, Virginia, Guiana, Peru, China, Mexico, &c. *do believe this: as you may ſee* Deſcrip. Reg. Afric. Guineæ, cap. 21. 44. Acoſta lib. 5. c. 7. 8. Hug. Luiſcot. Part. 1. cap. 25. Jo. Lerius cap. 16. Sir Walt. Raughly, &c. *What Poet ſpeaks not* de Tartaro, Campis Eliſiis, Manibus? *And ſo do Philoſophers of beſt note, except* Galen, Epicurus, Plinius, &c. *As for* Pythagoras, *and his Maſter* Pherecides, *the* Druides, *the* Indian Brachmanes, Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca,

* *Socrates* being near death (*apud Platonem, Ciceronе interprete*) ſaid thus: *Magna me ſpes tenet, Judices, bene mihi evenire quod mittar ad mortem: Neceſſe eſt enim ut ſit alterum de duobus, ut aut ſenſus omnino mors omnes auferat, aut in alium quendam locum ex his locis morte migretur. Quamobrem ſive ſenſus extinguitur, morſq; ei ſomno ſimilis eſt, qui nonnunquam etiam ſine viſis ſomniorum, placatiſſimam quietem affert; Dii boni, quid lucri eſt emori? aut quam multi dies reperiri poſſunt qui tali nocti anteponatur? &c. Sin vera ſunt quæ dicuntur, migrationem eſſe mortem, in eas oras quas qui è vita exceſſerunt, incolunt; id multo iam beatius eſt, te, cum ab iis qui ſe iudicium numero haberi volunt, evaſeris, ad eos venire qui vere iudices appellentur, &c. convenireq; eos, qui iuſte & cum fide vixerint. Hæc peregrinatio mediocris vobis videri poteſt? Ut vero colloqui cum Orphæo, Muſæo, Homero, Heſiodo liceat, quanti tandem æſtimatis? Equidem ſæpe mori ſi fieri poſſet, vellem, ut ea quæ dico mihi liceret invenire. Quanta delectatione autem afficeret, &c. Ne vos quidem, Judices, ii qui me abſoluiſtis mortem timueritis; Nec enim cuiquam bono mali quidquam evenire poteſt, nec vivo nec mortuo: Nec unquam eius res à Diis immortalibus negligentur, &c.* Sic Socrates.

Quædam & Natura nota ſunt, ut Mortalitas animæ penes plures ut Deus noſter penes omnes. Utar ergo & ſententia Platonis alicuius pronunciantis. Omnis anima eſt Immortalis. Utar & Conſcientia Populi conteſtantis Deum Deorum. Utar & reliquis communibus ſenſibus, qui Deum Judicem prædicant, [Deus videt] & [Deo commendo.] At cum aiunt [Mortuum quod Mortuum] & [Vive dum Vivis] & [poſt mortem omnia finiuntur, etiam ipſa] tunc meminero & cor vulgi cinerem, à Deo deputatum, & ipſam ſapientiam ſeculi ſtultitiam pronunciatam. Tunc ſi & Hæreticus ad vulgi vitia, vel ſeculi ingenia confugerit, diſcede, dicam, ab Ethnico, hæretice, etſi unum eſtis omnes. Tertul. lib. de Reſurrec. carn. cap. 3.

they all acknowledge it. Lege Marſil. Ficinum de Immort. Anim. *Yea,* Ariſtotle *himſelf ſaw this, as appeareth* De anima lib. 1. context. 65. 66. lib. 2. context. 21. lib. 3. context. 4. 6. 7. 19. 20. *Sure then the light of Nature diſcerneth it.*

Yet if theſe men ſay that there muſt be a Guide and Law for ſouls in their way to Happyneſs, and yet deny that the Scripture is it, I would fain know of them which is it, and where it is to be found? Hath God any other word or Law in the World above this? Sure neither Plato, *nor* Ariſtotle *did ever call their books the Word of God: and* Mahomets Alcoran *is far more unlike to be it then theirs. If they ſay that Reaſon is the only Guide and Law, I reply,* 1. *Reaſon is but the Eye by which we ſee our Directory and Law, and not the Directory and Law it ſelf.* 2. *Look on thoſe Countries through the World that have no Scripture-Guide, but follow their Reaſon, and ſee how they are Guided, and what difference there is between them and Chriſtians, (as bad as we are,) and if you think of this well, you will be aſhamed of your error.* Indians *have Reaſon as well as we; Nay look on the Wiſe Romans, and the great learned Philoſophers, who had advanced their Reaſon ſo high, and ſee how lamentably they were befooled in Spirituals; How they worſhipped multitudes of Idols, even taking thoſe for their Gods whom they acknowledged to be Leacherous, Adulterous, Perfidious, Bloody and Wicked. Read but* Juſtins Apol. Athenagoras, Tertull. Apol. &c. Origen cont. Celſ. Arnobius, Lactantius, Clemens Alex. Protreptic. Minutius Fælix, Athanaſ. &c. *fully of this. Moſt certainly either the Scriptures are Gods Word and Law, or elſe there is none in the known world; And if there be none, how doth the juſt, true and Righteous God govern the Rational Creature, ſo as to lead him to the Happyneſs prepared for him? But of this in the fourth Argument following.*

3. *I would entreat theſe men but ſoberly to conſider this; What if there were no full Abſolute certainty of the truth of Scripture or Chriſtian Religion, but it were only probable, (which no conſiderate man can deny) were it not the wiſeſt way to receive it? what if it ſhould prove true that there is a Hell for the wicked, what a caſe are you in then? You know your worldly happyneſs is a very dream and a ſhaddow; and a bruitiſh delight which is mixt with miſery, and quieteth not the ſoul, and periſheth in the uſing. If you do loſe it, you loſe but a toy, a thing of nothing which you muſt ſhortly loſe whether you will or no. But if you loſe Heaven, and fall into Endleſs miſery, it*

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is another kind of loss. Me thinks then that common Reason should perswade men to venture all, though it were at uncertainty, upon that Religion which tels us but of a Possibility of a Heaven and a Hell, then to venture on a possibility of everlasting Misery, for a little bestial pleasure, which is gone while we are enjoying it! Yea, and when even in this life these sensual men have not neer so much true content as the Christian! Verily if I doubted of the truth of the Christian Religion, I durst not be of any other; but should judge it the wisest course to venture all I had in this World upon the Hopes that it propoundeth; yea, meer madness to do otherwise. If men that are at a lottery will venture a small sum for a possibility of a great one, though they know there is but one of twenty that shall get it; how much more would any wise man leave a little vanity, in hope of Everlasting Glory, and to avoid everlasting misery, though it were uncertain. But most of all, when We have that full Certainty of it as We have.

4. *Lastly, I would have these men consider, that though We doubt not but to prove that Scripture is Gods perfect infallible Law, yet if it were so that this could not be proved, yet this would not overthrow the Christian Religion. If the Scripture were but the writings of honest men, that were subject to mistakes, and to contradictions in the manner and circumstances, yet they might afford us a full Certainty of the substance of Christianity, and of the Miracles wrought to confirm the doctrine.* Tacitus, Suetonius, Livy, Florus, Lucan, &c. *were all heathens and very fallible; and yet their history affords us a certainty of the great substantial passages of the Romane affairs which they treat of, though not of all the smaller passages and circumstances. He that doubteth whether there were such a man as* Julius Cæsar, *or that he fought with* Pompey, *and overcame him, &c. is scarce reasonable, if he know the Histories. So though* Math. Paris, Malmesbury, Hoveden, Speed, Cambden, *and our own Parliaments that enacted our Laws, were all fallible men, and mistaken in divers smaller things, yet they afford us a full Certainty that there was such a man as* William *the Conqueror,* William Rufus, &c. *that there were such Parliaments, such Lords, such fights and victories, &c. He that would not venture all that he hath on the truth of these, especially to gain a Kingdome by the venture, were no better in this then mad. Now if Scripture were but such common writings as these, especially joyned with that uncontrolled Tradition that hath since conveyed it to us, may it not yet give us a full certainty, that Christ was in the flesh, and*

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that he preached this Doctrine for the substance, and wrought these Miracles to confirm it, and enabled his followers to work the like, which will afford us an invincible Argument for our Christianity. Therefore Grotius, &c. *and so the old Fathers when they disputed with the Heathens, did first prove the truth of Christian Religion, before they came to prove the Divine Authority of the Scriptures. Not that we are at any such uncertainty, or that any Christian should dare to take up here, as if the Scriptures were not Infallible and Divine. But being now speaking to another sort of men according to their capacity, I say, if it were otherwise, yet might we have certainty of our Religion. I shall say somewhat more to these men in speaking to the rest.*

2. THE *second sort that I shall speak to, is the Papists. I find the chief thing that turns them from the Reformed Churches, and confirms them against us, is because they think they cannot otherwise maintain their Christianity, but by deriving it from their Church. The first Question therefore that Papists will dispute on with us, is, How know you the Scriptures to be the Word of God? For they fondly suppose, that because it cannot be known without the help of Tradition or Humane Testimony, that therefore this must be only the Testimony of the true Church, and that must be some visible Church, and that Church must be presently in Being, and must be Judge in the case, and must be Infallible in Judging, and all this can agree to no other Church; and therefore that theirs is the only true Church. And thus the particular Church of Rome will prove her self the only or universal Church. To stand here to confute these vain ungrounded Conclusions, would be to digress too far, and make this Preface too long. Yet something I wrote against their pretended Papal Infallibility, and of the uncertainty of their Faith; but being perswaded by others to insert no more Controversie here, I reserve it for a fitter place. Only I would desire briefly any Papist to shew, whether their Doctrine do not leave the whole Christian Faith at utter uncertainty, and consequently destroy it (as much as in them lies?) For seeing they build all on the supposed Infallibility of the Church; and* * *that Church is the Present Church: and that is the Roman Church*

* *Vid. Greg. de Valent. To. 3. Disp. 1. Quæst. 1. punct. 7. §. 12. Et Bellarm. lib. 2. de sacrament. in gen. cap. 25. & Suarez. de Fide Disput. 5. §. 4.*

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only; and || that is only the Pope, as the Jesuits and most Papists say, or a general Councel, as the French: see what a case they bring Christianity to with their followers? Every man that will Believe the Scripture, yea, or the Christian Faith, must 1. Believe or know that Rome is the true Church 2. That it hath Authority to judge of Gods Word, and of the Christian Faith, which is truly it, and which not. 3. That this Authority was given by Gods Word (this must be known before men can know that God hath a Word, or what it is.) 4. That they are Infallible in this Judgement. 5. That Peter was at Rome, and was there Bishop, and conferred this Soveraignty on them as his Successors. 6. That each particular Pope is a true Pope, and lawfully called (which all the world must know, that know neither him, nor when, nor how he was called.) 7. That the Pope determines it as a matter of Faith (otherwise, they confess he may err, and be an Heretick.) 8. And they must know where is the proper subject of Infallibility, whether in the Pope, or Councel, or else they know not which to build on (which yet they are far from agreeing on themselves.) 9. When two or three Popes sit together (which is no new thing) the world must know which is the right (for all the rest may err.) 10. Or if they joyn a Councel in the Infallibility, they must be certain that Christ hath given Councels this Infallibility. 11. And that this is only to a Councel of Romanists. 12. And so that the Roman Church is the Universal Church, and not only a Part, as other Churches are. 13. And that they are free from Error in Councel, and not out of it. 14. That the Councel be General and Lawful (else they confess it may err.) 15. Therefore all men must be certain that it be summoned by the Pope. 16. And that the Bishops that constitute it are lawfully called. 17. And that the Pope doth Ratifie the Acts of this Councel, as well as call the Councel (else they conclude that they are unlawfull, or may be fallible.) He that knows not all these, cannot be certain that Scripture is Gods Word, no nor of the Truth of the Christian Faith according to the Papist grounds. And can all the world be certain of them? Or are all their Laicks certain? Yea or their Clergy? Yea or any man? Adrian the sixth tells us, that the Pope is fallible: and shall we not believe the Pope himself, confessing his own Ignorance? Though councels have decreed against Councels, and Popes against Popes, over and over. Yet we must needs believe them In-

|| *Suarez. de fide Disput. 5. §. 7. & Disp. 11. §. 3. Bellarm. lib. 1. de Comiliis cap. 12. & 19. & lib. 2. cap. 2.*

Yet sometimes they seem so pious as to prefer the Scripture before the Church: *Nunquam sane mihi venit in mentem Ecclesiæ iudicium sacrorum voluminũ authoritati anteferre, quæ spiritus cælestis afflatu exarata fuisse cum Petro confitemur, cum & pueri, qui ne primoribus quidem labris divina monumenta attigerunt, satis intelligant, veræ ecclesiæ rationem sine Verbi Dei integritate, quæ fidei sedes est atq; fundamentum, constare ullo modo posse Payva*

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D'Andard: Defens. Consilii Trident. cont. Kemnit. lib. 2. pag. (*mihi*) 202. *impudentia vid.* Rivet. Catholic. Orthodox. Tract. 1. Qu. 9. pag. 94.

fallible, or forfeit our Christianity, according to their doctrine; that is, We must either renounce both Experience, Sense, and Reason, or our Faith. Is not this the way to drive the world again to Heathenism? And whether all the world lose not the Certainty of their Christianity, when there is an Inter-regnum upon the death of a Pope, let them further study. Full certain I am that the Christian World in Peters *dayes did never pretend to hold their Faith upon his meer Infallibility: Nor did* Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, *or any of the ancientst that ever I met with, hold their Belief of Christ or Scripture on the Infallibility of the Bishop of* Rome. *The contrary I shall manifest in more convenient place. I will only adde this Question: How doth the Pope and his Councell know the Scripture to be Gods Word? If they Believe it on their own Authority, that is, because themselves say so, then they are self-Idolizers; and what makes them affirm it to be so? or what Reason have they for their Belief? If they Believe by any convincing Reason proving Scripture to be a Divine Testimony, then why may not the Clergy out of Councell, and others also Believe on the same grounds? Else the Faith of the Pope and his Councel will not have the same grounds with the faith of the People or Church besides: and then it is another faith: and so either the People or Pope are Hereticks. And why are we blamed for not Believing on the Authority of the Pope and Councel, when the Pope and Councel themselves Believe not on that (that is, their own) Authority? I hope they will not turn Enthusiasts and pretend to private extraordinary Revelations of the Spirit. If they say that they Receive the Scripture by the Tradition of the Antient Church, and so on their Credit, Why may not We know as well as they What the Ancients say in the point? and is it not the honestest way if they know more herein then We, to produce it, and shew us what and Where the Antients speak? If they have it meerly upon Verbal Tradition, have not other men as good ears as the Pope and his Councel? and therefore (being as honest) to be as well credited in such reports: || And if it be their office to keep Traditi-*

|| So far have the Romanists been from being faithful keepers of their pretended additional Traditions, that by depraving the Monuments of Antiquity, and by adding a multitude of Legends and forged writings, to advance their own ends, they have done the Church of Christ more wrong then ever they are able to repair: (as the late King truly told the Marq: of *Worcester* in his (printed) conference:) But the vanity and forgery of their pretended Monuments is fully manifested by our James: Cook's *Censura Patrum Erasmus*, *Dan: Blondellus* (on the by in all his writings, but) most fully in his *Examen Decretalium*: so our Dr *Jo: Reignolds* on other parts, and many more have opened their folly.

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ons, why have they been ſo careleſs as to loſe all the reſt of the things which Jeſus *did which* John *ſaith, would fill ſo many Volumes: and alſo all the Traditions which themſelves ſuppoſe* Paul *to have delivered unwritten to the Theſſalonians and others. Shall we believe them Infallible that have already ſo deceived us?*

And for thoſe that think it of Abſolute neceſſity that the Church have ſome Judge for final Deciſion of Controverſies about the ſence of Scripture; and that judge it ſo abſurd a thing for every man to be Judge; and therefore they think we muſt needs come to Rome *for a Judge: 1. I would know whether they ſpeak of Fundamentals, and ſuch other points as are plain in Scripture; or of ſmaller points that are dark? For the former, what need is there of a Judge? No Chriſtian denyeth Fundamentals: and Heathens will not ſtand to the Papall Infallibility. A teacher indeed is neceſſary for the Ignorant: but not a Judge. It is the vileſt doctrine that moſt ever Rome did forge, that Fundamentals themſelves are ſuch to us becauſe* they *determine them; and that we cannot know them but on their Authority: yea, the Church (that is, the Pope) may by his determination, make new Fundamentals. If they were not impudent, this abomination would never have found ſo many Patrons. They ask us, How we know Fundamentals, and which be they? I anſwer, Thoſe things that God hath made the Conditions of ſalvation. And what if we take in both them and more, that ſo we may be ſure not to miſs of them, ſo we go but to plain and weighty truths, what danger is in that? 2. Seeing all Chriſtians in the world do hold the fundamentals (elſe they are not truly Chriſtians) why are they not fit deliverers or Judges of them, as well as the Pope? 3. And for leſſer and darker points, by what means is the Pope and his Councel able to determine them, and to decide the Controverſie? If by rational means, what are they? and why may not as rational men decide it as truly? 4. Will it not be as hard a Queſtion, Who ſhall judge of the meaning of the Popes Decretals or Canons, where they are doubtfull? and ſo* in infinitum. *I ſee not but the Councell of Trent ſpeaks as darkly as the Scripture; and is as hard to be underſtood. 5. If God leave a point dark and doubtfull, will it not remain ſo, whatſoever confident men may determine? 6. If God have left a certain means, and infallible Judge, for determining all controverſies, and expounding Scriptures, why then is it not done, but the Church left ſtill in ſuch uncertainties and contentions. As ſome Anabaptiſts among us do boaſt of a power to work Miracles,*

and yet we can get none of them to ſhew their power in one; Juſt ſo doth the Church of Rome boaſt of an Infallibility in deciding of Controverſies, and yet they will not infallibly decide them. If they ſhould grow modeſt and ſay, they do not determine what is certain in it ſelf; but what we are to reſt in. I anſwer, Why ſhould we be compelled to profeſs things uncertain? If they ſay, they are not all fit to be decided, and therefore the Church leaves ſome to mens Liberty. I anſwer, So Chriſt thought them not all fit to be decided, and therefore hath left many in doubtfulneſs; and is it not as fit we ſhould reſt in Chriſts deciſion? and his judgement concerning points fit to be cleared and decided, as in mans? The palpable miſtake of that one Text 2 Pet. 1. 20. *(that no Scripture is of Private Interpretation) hath miſled many men in this point. For they think it ſpeaks of the Quality of the Interpreter, as if Private men muſt not interpret it; when the Text plainly ſpeaks of the Quality of the ſubject. The true Paraphraſe is evidently this* [q.d. *Beſides the Voice from Heaven, giving Teſtimony to Chriſt, we have alſo in the old Scriptures a ſure word of Propheſie teſtifying of him (for to him give all the Prophets witneſs), whereto ye do well to take heed, as to a light ſhining in a dark place, &c. But then you muſt underſtand this; That no Propheſie of Chriſt in the old Teſtament is of Private interpretation, that is, it is not to be interpreted as ſpeaking only of thoſe private perſons who were but Types of Chriſt, of whom indeed it literally and firſt ſpeaks: For though it might ſeem as if the Prophets ſpoke of themſelves, or of the Type only, who was a Private perſon; yet indeed it is Chriſt that the Spirit that ſpake by them intended: For the Propheſie came not in old time by the Will of man that ſpoke them, and therefore is not to be interpreted privately of themſelves, or what they might ſeem to intend: but holy men ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt; and therefore his meaning muſt be looked to, and he intended Chriſt the Antitype*] *For example: When* David *ſaid* Pſal. 2. Yet will I ſet my King on my holy hill Zion; *You muſt not interpret this of* David *only, a Private perſon, and but a Type: but of Chriſt the Publique perſon and Antitype.*

But I muſt ſpend no more words here on this kind of men.

Let

LEt me adventure on a few words to the Miniſters of the Goſpel; not of advice (for that was judged preſumptuous in my laſt, though but to the younger) but of Apologie. Though the Acceptance of this Treatiſe be far beyond what I expected; yet ſome have ſignified to me their diſlike of ſome things in this ſecond Part, of which I think it my duty to tender them ſatisfaction.

1. *Some ſay it is a Digreſſion.* Anſw. *And what hurt is that to any man? I confeſs it was fitted at firſt to my own uſe (as all the reſt was) and why may it not be uſeful to ſome body elſe? My buſineſs was not to open a Text; but to help Chriſtians to enjoy the ſolid comforts which their Religion doth afford: the greateſt hinderance whereof, in my obſervation, is a weak or unſound Belief of the Truth of it. And therefore I ſtill think, that the very main work lyeth in ſtrengthening their Belief. So that I am ſure I digreſſed not from the way that led to my intended end.*

2. *Others have told me, that I ſhould not have mixed controverſie, with ſuch Practical matter.* Anſw. *And ſome, as wiſe, tell me, They had rather all were omitted then this. For the Truth muſt be known before the Goodneſs will be Deſired or Delighted in. It ſeems to me the ordinary cauſe of Back ſliding, when men either begin at the Affections, or beſtow moſt of their labour there, before they have laid a good foundation in the Underſtanding. And they are ſcarce likely to be the longeſt-winded Chriſtians, nor to die for their Religion, that ſcarce know why they are Chriſtians. Me thinks its prepoſterous for men to beſtow ten or twenty years in ſtudying the meaning of Gods word, before they well know, or can prove that it is Gods Word. As the Italians mentioned by* Melanchon, *that diſputed earneſtly that Chriſt was Really in the bread, when they did not well believe that he was in Heaven. If Fundamentals be controverted, it concerns us to be well ſeen in ſuch Controverſies. However, if this be unuſeful to any man, if he will but let it alone, it will do him no harm.*

3. *Some blame me for making ſo much uſe of the Argument from Miracles: And withall they think it invalid, except it be apparent Truth which they are brought to confirm.* Anſw. 1. *If it be firſt known to be Truth, there needs no Miracles to prove it.* 2. *Do not all our Divines uſe this Argument from Miracles?* 3. *And I do not by uſing this, hinder any man from producing or uſing as many more as*

he can. I no where say, that this is the only Argument. 4. *If these men were as wise as they should be, they would take heed of shaking the Christian Cause, and striking at the very root of it, for the maintaining of their Conceits. If they take down the chief Argument which confirms it, what do they less.* 5. *Search the Scripture, and see, whether this were not the chief Argument,* 1. *which succeeded then for bringing men to Believe,* 2. *and which Christ himself laid the greatest weight on, and expected most from.* Nathaniel *believed upon Christs telling him of his conference at a distance.* Joh. 1. 48, 49. *Upon his beginning of Miracles at Cana in Galilee, he manifested forth his Glory, and his Disciples believed on him,* Joh. 2. 11. *The Jews therefore enquired for Signs, as that which must confirm any new Revelation to be of God,* Joh. 2. 18. & 6. 30. 1 Cor. 1 22. *And though Christ blame them for their unreasonable unsatisfied expectations herein, and would not humour them in each particular, that they would sawcily prescribe him, yet still he continued to give them Miracles, as great as they required. Though he would not come down from the Cross to convince them (for then how should he have suffered for sin) yet he would Rise again from the dead, which was far greater. They that saw the Miracle of the Loaves, said. This is of a Truth the Prophet that should come into the world,* Joh. 6. 14. John *(say they) did no Miracle: but all that* John *spake of this man were true: and many Believed on him there,* Joh. 10. 41. *Many believed when they saw the Miracles which he did,* Joh. 2. 23. *See also* Act. 4. 16. Joh. 6. 2. & 7. 31. & 11. 47. Act. 6. 8. & 8. 6. 13. and Gal. 3. 5. Act. 2. 43. & 4. 30. & 5. 12. & 7. 36 & 14. 3. Heb. 2. 4. *And Christ himself saith, If I had not done the works that no man else could do, ye had no sin (in not believing)* Joh. 15. 24. *And therefore he promiseth the Holy Ghost to his Disciples to enable them to do the like, to convince the world,* Mat. 16. 17, 18. *Yea, to do greater Works then he had done,* Joh. 14. 12. *And he upbraideth and most terribly threatned the unbelievers that had seen his mighty works,* Mat. 11. 20, 21, 23. Luk. 10. 13. *Yea, the Blaspheming of the power by which he wrought them, (and his Disciples afterward were to work them) and ascribing them to the Devil, he maketh the unpardonable sin,* Mat. 12. 31, 32. *see also,* Mat. 11. 2, 3, 4. and 13. 54. and 14. 2. Mar. 6. 2. 14. Joh. 5. 19, 20. and 7. 3. *He tels them, The Works that I do, bear Witness of me,* Joh. 5. 36. and 10. 25. *Believe not me; beleive the Works that I do,* Joh. 10. 37, 38. *Believe me for the very Works sake,*

ſake, Joh. 14. 11. *And how did the Apoſtles preach to convince the world, but partly by telling them of Chriſts Reſurrection (the greateſt of all his Miracles,) and his other Works: and partly by doing Miracles themſelves. They tell them, He was* approved *of God by ſigns and wonders,* Act. 2. 22. and 7. 36. *They declared alſo what Miracles and Wonders were wrought by the Apoſtles,* Act. 15. 12. *And* Paul *vindicateth the Credit of his own Apoſtleſhip, and ſo the truth of his Teſtimony, to the* Corinthians, *thus,* [*Truly the ſigns of an Apoſtle were wrought among you in all patience, in ſigns and wonders and mighty deeds.* 2 Cor. 12. 12. *The Way of bringing men to Believe in thoſe daies is expreſſed* * Heb. 2. 3, 4. How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him (*there is ſenſe to the firſt Receivers, and their Tradition to the next:*) God alſo bearing them witneſs both with ſigns and wonders and divers Miracles; and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt according to his will. *And who dare queſtion this Witneſs of God? And fear fell on them all, and the name of Jeſus was magnified, and men converted by the ſpeciall Miracles that* Paul *did,* Act. 19. 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19. *I will ſay no more to the oppoſers of the ſufficiency of this Argument, but wiſh them to anſwer, or learn of that blind man,* Joh. 9. 16. *Can a man that is a ſinner do ſuch Miracles? We know that God heareth not ſinners. Or hear* Nicodemus, Joh. 3. 2. *We know that thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do theſe Miracles, except God be with him. Naturall Reaſon ſhews us, that God being the true, and Mercifull Governor of the World, the courſe of Nature cannot be altered but by his ſpecial appointment; and that he will never ſet the ſeals of his omnipotency to a lye; nor ſuffer the laſt and greateſt inducement of Belief to be uſed to draw men to falſhood: For then how deplorate were the Condition of mankind.*

Object. *But (you'l ſay) Falſe Prophets may ariſe and ſhew ſigns: and Antichriſt ſhall come with lying Wonders.* Anſw. *Theſe are all lying wonders indeed; ſeeming to be Miracles, when they are not.* Object. *But the great queſtion is, How we ſhall know which are Miracles indeed, when poor Mortals may be ſo eaſily deceived by ſuperior powers?* Anſw. *For the Difference between true Miracles and falſe,* Camero, Prideaux, *and moſt Divines that write of this Argument have handled it, to whom I referr you. I will only ſay this more; That we*

* Obſerve this Text well, and it will help you to anſwer the Queſtion, [How know you the Scripture to be the Word of God?]

We need not be curious in this enquiry: for if any doubt whether Miracles may not be Wrought *to delude, I* Would *add these* Qualifications *to that Medium, and thus form the Major Proposition* [That doctrine, or those books which were attested by Apparent, Frequent, uncontrouled Miracles, must needs be of God.] *But such is this, &c. A wonder* Wrought *once or twice may easier deceive, then that which is done one hundred times. A* Wonder *in a Corner may be blazed falsly to be a miracle: But Christ had so many thousand witnesses (as of the Miracle of the Loaves) and five hundred at once that saw him after his Resurrection, and the Apostles appealed to* Whole *Churches (even* Where *they had secret adversaries) who might easily have disproved them, if it had not been true; and they spake with tongues before people of many Nations, and it was not one, nor one hundred, but the multitudes of Christians that had one gift or other of this sort, either Miracles specially so called, or healing, or prophecying, or tongues, &c.*

See 1 *Cor.* 12. from the 1. verse to the 12. And *Mark* 16. 17.

But especially no Uncontrouled *Miracles shall ever be used to deceive the world. Two ways doth God Controul even the seeming Miracles of deceivers.* 1. *By doing greater in opposition to them, and so disgracing and confounding them, and the Authors, and the Cause; so God did by the Magicians in* Egypt; *by the Exorcists in* Act. 19. *and by* Simon Magus, *as Church History tels us. In this Case, it is no disparagement to Gods Mercy or Faithfulness to let men work false wonders; for he doth but make them the occasion of his Triumph; that the Victory of Truth may be more eminent, and mens faith more confirmed.* 2. *Also by some clear and undoubted Truth (either known to Common Reason, or by former Scriptures) doth God oft* Controul *deceiving* Wonders. *For if they are used to Attest an undoubted Falshood, then the former established Truth contradicting them, is sufficient controulment. So that as God will never set his own proper seal of a* true Miracle *to an untruth, so neither will he suffer a* seeming Miracle *to go uncontrouled* When *it may endanger the faith and safety of mankind. Nor can it be shewn that ever he did otherwise, whereas the Miracles of Christ and his Disciples were uncontrouled, Frequent, Numerous, Apparent, Prevalent, and Triumphant.*

Object. *Then if Miracles be wrought now, they* Will *inferr a New Scripture.* Answ. *No such matter. They* Will *prove the Testimony to be Divine, where it is certain that they are* Wrought *to confirm any Testimony; but no more. God may work them* Without *man, to stir up*

mens

mens hearts, and rowse them to Repentance, * and not to confirm any new Testimony. Or he may enable man to work them for attestation of formerly revealed Truth.

* Vide Suarez de fide Disput. 4. Sect. 3. §. 10.

Object. But wicked men may do Miracles. Answ. But not when they please: nor for what they please, but as God pleases. Wicked men may be Witnesses of the Truth of God.

I conclude with this Argument. That which was the great Argument used by Christ and his Apostles to win the world to Believe, should be the Great Argument now for every man to use to that end with himself and others. But that was this from Miracles; therefore, &c.

4. The same men that make this exception, are offended that I overpass some other Arguments, which are taken to be the chiefest: as Scripture Efficacy, and the witness of the Holy Ghost to the Consciences of Believers.

Answ. 1. Why should I be tyed to do that which so many have done already? 2. I never intended the full handling of the point, but two or three Arguments to strengthen the weak. And may I not choose which thought fittest, as long as I hinder no man to use what other he please? 3. The Efficacy is either on the Understanding, or on the Will and Affections. If on the Understanding, then it is the Belief of Scripture truth which is thus effected: and so the Argument should run thus: Whatsoever is so effectuall as to perswade men of its Truth or Divinity, that is True or Divine; but the Scripture is such, &c. I need not speak of the absurdity of the Major. † Or if the Efficacy be on the Will and Affections, then it presupposeth that it is first Believed to be True. For nothing works on the Will, but by means of the Understanding. But I neither dare, nor need to shew the Weakness of such Arguments, the Papists have done too much in it, as their Writings generally will shew you. See Vane, Cressye, Richworths Dialogues, Martin, Stapleton; and most run that way.

† Lege Rob. Baronium Apolog. Tract. 9. punct. 6. Assert. 3. pag. 729. 730. pleniſſimè.

4. * And for the Testimony of the Spirit, it consisteth, first, in its Testimony by the Miracles which it enabled the Apostles to effect for the sealing of their doctrine; 2. And in the Sanctifying Illumi-

* Vide Doctiss. Rob. Baronium Apodix. ad Fes. Turnebullum pag. 626. ad 729. & Tract. 9. pag. 2. pag. 696. & pag. 733. Maximopere damnamus illos qui, &c. Vide etiam Vegam, lib. 9. de Justif. c. 47. Greg. Valent. To. 3. Disp. 1. Quæst. 1. punct. 1. §. 5. Et Suarez Disp. 3. de fide, §. 3. Et Contr. Vid. Stapleton. Controv. Relect. 4. qu. 3. Art. 2. Resp. ad Arg. 1. Et in defens. authorit. Eccles. lib. 3. cap. 12. §. 11. Malder in 2.2. qu. 1. Art. 1. §. 8. Mel. Canu. lib. 2. de loc. cap. 8.

nation of our understandings to see that which is Objectively Revealed. So that this Testimony is the efficient and not objective Cause of our Belief, in this later sence. If men should judge of the Canon of Scripture, by the immediate Testimony of the Spirit, as if this were some Exterior Revealer of what is Divinely inspired, We should then have as great variety of Canons almost as of persons. Men talk of this in meer Disputes; but I never knew the man that would undertake to determine of the Canon by retiring into his heart, and consulting meerly with the Spirit within him.

5. *Another great exception of the same men, is, That I seek to satisfie* Reason *so much, of the Scriptures Authority: And the Reasons which they they urge against my Reasoning are these two.* 1. *It is too neer the* Socinian *way.* Answ. Socinians *will believe nothing, without Reason or Evidence from the Nature of the Thing Revealed: that is, They Believe nothing at all, as Certain: For if the* Thing *be* Evident, *it is (as such) the Object of Knowledge, and not of Belief. I will Believe any thing in the World which I know certainly that God speaks or Revealeth: Though the Thing in it self seem never so* unreasonable. *For I have Reason to Believe (or rather to Know) that All is True which God Revealeth, how improbable soever to flesh and blood. Is it not a shame that Learned men should charge this very Opinion in* Chillingworth, *Dr.* Hammon, *and others, as guilty of* Socinianism? *and thereby,* 1. *Make the Papists brag, that we cannot confute them, but on* Socinian *Principles.* 2. *And make young Scholars through prejudice turn off from the true ways of defending Scripture-Authority; to the great Wrong:* 1 *of their own souls,* 2. *and of their people,* 3. *and of the Protestant,* 4. *and Christian Cause.* 3. *And how could all the Wits in the World do more to advance* Socinianism *then these men do? by making men believe, that only the* Socinians *have Reason for their Religion: Which if it were true, (as nothing less) who would not turn to them?* 4. *And what more can be done to the disgrace, and ruin of Christianity, then to make the World believe that we have no reason for it? Nor are able to prove it true against an Adversary? What would these men do, if they lived among Christs Enemies, and were challenged to defend their Religion, or prove it true? Would they say (as they do to me,)* I will Believe and not Dispute? *Christs Cause then would be little beholden to them. And how would they Preach for the Conversion of Infidels? if they had not Reason to give them for what they*

Read *Videlius* his *Rationale Theolog.* against *Veronius*, and throughout, how far Reason and Natural Principles may be used in Disputes of Divinity.

they perſwade them to? How will they Try the ſpirits, and Try all things, and hold faſt that which is good, but by Diſcourſe? But it ſeems theſe men themſelves have more Reaſon for their believing in Chriſt, then in Mahomet *or Antichriſt. They are good Chriſtians and Teachers that while!*

But the great Argument is this, They ſay (and great ones write ſo) that the Divine Authority of Scripture is Principium indemonſtrabile: *a principle not to be* Proved, *but* Believed: *for no Science proves its Principles.*

To which I Anſw. 1. *When our* R. Baronius, *and others do affirm it to be* Principium indemonſtrabile, *it is not as if it were not at all demonſtrable; but that it is not* demonſtrabile per aliam Revelationem; *But they acknowledge that it contains in it thoſe Caracters of the Divine Authority which by Reaſon or Diſcourſe may be diſcerned.* 2. *It is therefore improper to ſay it is* Credendum, *a* thing to be believed *firſt, and directly that theſe Books are Gods Word; ſeeing it is (by conſequence) confeſſed, that it is a Point to be* Known *by the foreſaid Evidence; therefore not firſt to be* believed. 3. *And otherewiſe they contradict themſelves, when they beſtow whole Volumes to prove, that, It is part of the formal object of Faith (which anſwers the* Cur Credis?) *and yet to affirm it to be* principium primò Credendum, *which makes it the* material *Object of Faith; For in this ſence it cannot be both, as I ſhall ſhew.* 4. *How the Divine Authority of Scripture is the* Principium Religionis Chriſtianæ, *and how not, would hold a long debate of it ſelf. Our* R. Baronius *himſelf ſaith, that [when we ſay all Chriſtians ſhould reſolve their Faith into the Divine and Canonical Authority of Scripture, they do not mean that this is the only way of reſolving Faith; as if no other way were poſſible, or available to ſalvation; but only that this way is the moſt convenient, profitable and certain; yea, and is neceſſary too in thoſe Churches, where the Scriptures are known.* Apologia adv. Turnebul. Tract. 1. c. 2. obſ. 1. p. 46.] *Which words ſhew, how far Scripture is a* Principium. 5. *As Theologie, Chriſtianity, and all Religion do preſuppoſe Reaſon, (as all Morality preſuppoſeth Naturality) ſo it is evident that ſome of the Principles of Religion, or of Chriſtianity muſt be firſt proved by Reaſon. And ſo we may compare it to thoſe inferior Sciences, whoſe Principles muſt be proved by ſuperior Sciences, though not by the ſame Science. Though Scripture in point of excellency ſhould not be ſaid to be inferior to Reaſon, yet in point of*

Order it may; as still pre-requiring or pre supposing Reason. As the form is after the matter, and the habit after the faculty. 6. *Those Characters of Divine Authority which Divines mention, may (at least) some of them, be demonstrated to others (as Propheſies fulfilled, (which is Miraculous oft) and all to our ſelves: Therefore the Scripture-Authority is not an Indemonſtrable Principle.* 7. *The very being of all Belief lyeth in this, that it be an Aſſent to the Truth of an Enunciation, on the credit of the Teſtifier or Revealer. Now if we muſt firſt* Believe *Scripture to be Gods Word (and not Know it) then we muſt Believe it on the credit of the Revealer. And then it is by ſome other Revelation, or by it ſelf. If by ſome other, then how know I that other Revelation to be of God? and ſo* in infinitum. *But if I believe it to be of God, becauſe it revealeth it ſelf to be ſo (as our Divines ſay;) then this ſelf-Revelation is,* 1. *either by Way of proper Teſtimony, or* 2. *by Objective Evidence, to be diſcerned by Reaſon. If the former (which muſt be ſaid, or it cannot be the material object of Faith) then either I muſt beleive every Book that affirms it ſelf to be Divine, or elſe I muſt have ſome Reaſon to Believe this ſo affirming of it ſelf more then others. And theſe Reaſons will be things Known and not Believed.* 2. *But if the later (by Objective Evidence) (* which is it that Divines generally ſay) then why do they not obſerve, that this is to unſay what was ſaid, and to ſay plainly, that it is a thing to be* Known, *and not ſtrictly* Believed, *that this is Gods Revelation? Things evident are the Objects of Knowledge: Things Teſtified are the Objects of Faith (as Teſtified.)*

Vid. Baron. Tract. 9. per totum.

* *Authoritatem Scripturæ duplici modo Deus apud nos conteſtatur.* 1 *In eo quod eandem ornavit notandis qualitatibus & prærogativis ſupra omnia humana Scripta.* 2. *In eo quod omnium ſuorum corda Spiritu ſuo afficit ut agnoſcant veritatem ſuam in Scriptis illis micantem.* Rivet. Catholic. Orthodox. in Tractat. primo. Quæſt. 12. pag. 131. Col. 2.

8. *Yet I conſeſs, That when we firſt Know this or that be a Divine Teſtimony, We may in a ſecond place* Believe *it. For it is* Revealed *in Scripture;* [*Thus ſaith the Lord, &c.*] *And ſo the ſame thing may be, and is the object of Knowledge and of Belief. But it muſt (in the rational order) be Known firſt, and not* Believed *firſt. For elſe (as is ſaid) I ſhould Believe every writing ſo affirming it ſelf Divine; or elſe Believe the affirmation of* this *without Evidence and Reaſon.* 9. *And indeed what elſe can be the meaning of our Divines, when they tell us, that all faith is reſolved into the credit or Authority of the Teſtifier and Revealer? And as our* Baronius, Apol. cont. Turnebul. Tract 3. §. 3. cap. 4. p. 108. *ſaith,* [*Faith dependeth on two Principles, which muſt neceſſarily be* foreknown, *that a thing may be believed on ones Authority*] Suarez *rightly obſerveth,* diſp. 2. de Fide, Sect. 4. §. 5. & diſp. 3. Sect. 12. §. 1. *One is, that* [the party

ty doth ſpeak this,] *The other is, that* [he is one worthy to be Believed.] *Mark it, he ſaith Theſe two muſt be* foreknown, *and not* forebelieved. *(Though I know what he and others ſay, to make it both the* objectum formale & materiale *in ſeveral reſpects: but that can be but ſecondarily as I ſaid.) As for their ſimilitude from the Sun, which Reveals it ſelf and other things: beſides that objects of ſenſe, and of Reaſon much differ in this, and ſimilitudes prove nothing: In a ſound ſence I grant the thing inferred by it: To wit, that Scripture revealeth particular Truths to Belief, by Way of Divine Teſtimony or Affirmation: But it revealeth it ſelf to be Gods Teſtimony firſt to Knowledge by its own Characters or Excellencies (ſeconded by the external Teſtimony of Miracles;) And then 2. by Teſtification to Belief. Learned* Hooker, Eccleſ. Polit. li. 2 & 3. *hath ſhewed, that it is not firſt to be* Believed *that* [*Scripture is Gods Word,*] *but to be proved by Reaſon; which he affirmeth, is not very difficult demonſtratively to do. I dare ſtay no longer on this (referring the more exact diſcuſſion to ſome fitter place;) only, If Scripture cannot be proved to be Gods Word by reaſon; 1. Why do all our Divines in their Common-Places bring Reaſons to prove it? 2. How will they deal with Pagans and Enemies?* Object. *But they ſtill tell you* [*the Spirit is only ſufficient, when all Reaſons are brought.*] Anſw. 1. *Thats to remove the Queſtion. Or when the Queſtion is of the Objective ſufficiency, they anſwer of the Efficient, rectifying and elevating the Faculty. 2. Who knows not that a man may Believe or Know the Scripture to be Gods Word, without any more then a common help of the Spirit. The Devils and Damned believe or know it; and ſo doth many an ungodly man here. But a ſaving Knowledge or Belief doth indeed require a ſpecial grace of the Spirit.*

In a word, If Reaſon were of no more uſe here then ſome make it, as it were in vain to preach or Write on this point (for Chriſtianity;) So it would follow that he that is mad or drunk, or an Infant, (if not a brute) were the fitteſt to make a Chriſtian; which is ſo vile an imagination, that I dare ſay, He that hath the beſt and righteſt Reaſon, and by Conſideration makes the moſt uſe of it, is the beſt Chriſtian, and doth God beſt ſervice: And that all ſin is on the contrary, for Want of Right Reaſon, and the uſing of it by conſideration. But me thinks, I ſhould not need to plead for Reaſon, till beaſts can ſpeak and plead againſt me! But yet I muſt tell you, if you heard the Accuſation, you would excuſe my Apology.

If none but the Ignorant be an Enemy to Knowledge, ſure none but the unreaſonable is an enemy to Reaſon.

6. BUt the greateſt offence of all is, that I lay ſo much upon humane Teſtimony and Tradition: which ſome think uncertain; ſome think it would make our Faith too Humane; and ſome think it is too like the Papiſts arguing.

To all which I Anſw 1. *See whether the beſt of our Divines do not the like.* I will name ſome of the choiceſt that ever the Reformed Church enjoyed. Rob. Baronius *ſaith,* Apolog cont. Turnebul. Tract. 9 punct. 2. p 686. [*The Teſtification of the preſent Church is a condition neceſſarily requiſite for our believing the Scripture Authority: becauſe Faith comes by hearing.* 2. *From the conſent of all the preſent Church, or all Chriſtians now living, the chiefeſt Argument may be drawn to prove the Authority of any Canonical Book.* 3. *From the perpetual and univerſal Tradition and practice of the whole Church from the Apoſtles times to ours, we may have a humane perſwaſion, and that* Certain *and* Infallible, *of the Divine and Canonical Authority of thoſe Books which were ſtill undoubted, or which ſome call the Protocanonical.*] Dr. Whittakers *ſaith,* [*It belongs to the Church,* 1. *To be a Witneſs and keeper of the Scriptures.* 2. *To judge and diſcern between Scriptures which are true and genuine, and which are falſe, ſuppoſititious and Apocryphal.* 3. *To divulge them.* 4. *To expound them,* De Sacr. Scrip. Q. 3. contr. 1. cap. 2. pag. 203, 204.] *And in his* Duplicat. adv. Stapleton. *more fully,* pag. 57. [*Which of us knows not the neceſſity of the Miniſtry of the Church? and that it is ſafely and wiſely appointed of God? ſo that to contemn the Miniſtry and Teſtimony of the Church, is nothing elſe but to err from the Faith, and ruſh into moſt certain deſtruction.*] *See more* pag. 15. 58. 59 &c. 364. 60. 62. 69. 77. 71. 438. 119. 328. Davenant *alloweth of Hyſtorical Traditions,* de Judice controv. p. 11. §. 3. p. 24. 27. 30. 31 32. *The like might be ſhewed out of* Camero, Chamier, Ameſius, *and divers* || *others, but that I muſt not enlarge.*

|| *Chemnitius Exam. Concil. Tridcnt. Part.* 1. pag. (*mihi*) 109, 110, 111 &c. is ſo full, that in his eight ſorts of Tradition he not only ſaith much more then I here do, but in ſome of them ſatisfieth *Andradius* himſelf, *vide Andrad. Defenſ. Concilii Trident. lib.* 2. *pag.* (mihi) 217. *uſq; ad* 230.

2. *I would have the contrary minded tell me, How they know without Humane Teſtimony or Tradition, that theſe are the ſame Books which the Prophets and Apoſtles wrote? and wholly the ſame? that they are not depraved and wilfully corrupted? that theſe are all? How know you that one of the Books of* Eſther *is Canonical, and the other Apocriphal? Where is the man that ever knew the Canon from the* Apocripha *before it was told him? and without Tradition? I confeſs for my own part I could never boaſt of any ſuch Teſtimony or Light of the Spirit (nor Reaſon neither) which without Humane Teſtimony or Tradition would have made me Believe that the Book of Canticles is Canonical and written by* Solomon, *and the book of Wiſdom Apocriphal and written by* Philo *(as ſome think?) Or that* Pauls *Epiſtle to the* Laodiceans *(which you may ſee in* Bruno *in Epiſt.* Sixtus Senenſis *and others) is Apocriphal, and the ſecond and third Epiſtle of* John, *Canonical. Nor could I have known all or any Hiſtorical books, ſuch as* Joſhua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c. *to be written by Divine inſpiration, but by Tradition. Nor could I know all or any of thoſe books to be Gods word, which contain meer Poſitive conſtitutions, as* Geneſis, Exodus, Leviticus, &c. *Were it not for the ſame Tradition. Nor could I know that any of thoſe books were written by Divine Inſpiration which contain (beſides ſuch Hiſtory and Poſitives) nothing but the Truths which are known by the Light of Nature, without further ſupernatural Revelation; if it had not been for Tradition. Nor could I have known thoſe Books to be written by Divine Inſpiration, which ſpeak of meer ſupernatural things, either Hiſtorical, as Chriſts Incarnation, Reſurrection, &c. or Doctrinal, had not Tradition or Humane Teſtimony aſſured me, that theſe are the Books which thoſe Holy men wrote, and that ſuch undoubted, uncontroled Miracles were wrought for the Confirmation of their doctrine. Further I would know, How doth an illiterate man know, but by Humane Teſtimony, 1. Whether it be indeed a Bible that the Miniſter reads? 2. Or when he reads true, and when falſe? and whether any of thoſe words be in the Bible which men ſay are in it? 3. Or that it is truly tranſlated out of the Hebrew and Greek? 4. Or that it was Originally written in thoſe languages? 5. Or that the Copies were Authentick out of which they were tranſlated? 6. Or how will they know many Jewiſh Cuſtoms, or points in* Chronologie, Geography, *&c. without which ſome Scripture can never be underſtood? 7. Or how do the moſt Learned Criticks know the*

Nemo ex ſcriptoribus eccleſiaſticis qui continuata temporum ſucceſſione ab Apoſtolis huc uſq; vixerunt uſquam in Scriptis ſuis in memoriam redigere eos dignatus eſt. Euſeb Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 3 c. 19. *loquens de libris Apocryphis.*

the true ſignification of any one word of the Hebrew, or Greek (in Scripture or any other book,) yea Latine or Engliſh, or any language, but only by Tradition and Humane Faith?

Yea, there is no doubt but in ſome Caſes Tradition may ſave without Scripture. For 1. *Men were ſaved from* Adam *to* Moſes *without any Scripture, that we know of. And (as Dr.* Uſher *well obſerveth) One reaſon why they might then be without it, was the facility and certainty of knowing by Tradition. For* Methuſelah *lived many hundred years with* Adam, *and* Sem *lived long with* Methuſelah; *and* Iſaack *lived fifty years with* Sem: *So that three men ſaw from the beginning of the world till* Iſaacks *fiftyeth year.* 2. *And thouſands were converted and ſaved by the doctrine of the Apoſtles and primitive Preachers before it was committed to writing. So many Jews in the Captivity had not the Scripture.* 3. *And if any among the Abaſſines, Armenians, or ignorant Papiſts do believe in Chriſt upon meer Tradition (no doubt, they may) who can doubt of their ſalvation? For Chriſt ſaith,* that whoſoever Believeth in him ſhall not periſh: *(Which way ſoever he was brought to Believe.) Will you hear* Irenæus *in this, who lived before Popery was born?* adv. hær. lib. 3. cap. 4. Quid enim & ſi quibus de aliqua modica quæſtione diſceptatio eſſet? Nonne oporteret in antiquiſſimas recurrere eccleſias? *(Mark, he ſaith not* ad Eccleſiam Romanam, vel ad unam principem*)* in quibus Apoſtoli converſati ſunt, & ab eis de præſenti quæſtione ſumere quod certum & re liquidum eſt? Quid autem ſi neque Apoſtoli quidem ſcripturas reliquiſſent nobis? nonne oportebat ordinem ſequi Traditionis, quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant Eccleſias? Cui Ordinationi aſſentiunt multæ gentes barbarorum eorum qui in Chriſtum credunt, ſine Charactere vel atramento ſcriptam habentes per ſpiritum in cordibus ſuis ſalutem, & veterem Traditionem diligenter cuſtodientes, &c. Hanc fidem qui ſine literis crediderunt, quantum ad ſermonem noſtrum barbari ſunt; quantum autem ad ſententiam & conſuetudinem & converſationem, propter fidem per quam ſapientiſſimi ſunt, & placent Deo, &c. Sic per illam veterem Apoſtolorum Traditionem, ne in conceptionem quidem mentis admittunt quodcunque (Hareticorum) portentiloquium eſt.

Vid. Euſeb. Nierembg. de Origine S. Scripturæ, præcipue l. 1. & 2. & 3.

As for thoſe that think it favors the Papiſts to argue thus from Tradition, they are quite miſtaken, as I have ſhewed afterwards. The Papiſts build on the Authority of the Churches deciſive judgment: *But*

But I use only the Churches Testimony. *The Papists by the Church mean,* 1. *the present Church,* 2. *only their own Romish Church,* 3. *And in that only the Pope, or Councel (as infallible Judge.) But I mean,* 1. *the universal Church through the world,* 2. *Especially the Ancient Church next to the Apostles,* 3. *And therein the godly writers and Christians generally. The Papists ground all on the Church only, and think that we must first know the true Church, who is the Judge, before we can know the Scripture. But I value (in some cases more) the Testimony* ‖ *of Heathens, Jews, & all Hereticks (an enemies testimony being most valid against himself) And I use not their Testimony only, as they are the Church, or as Christians, but also as men, endued with Sence & Reason, and the common remnants of Moral honesty. In one word, The Papists receive the Scriptures on the Authoritative Infallible Judgement of their own Church, that is the Pope: & I receive it as Gods perfect Law delivered down from hand to hand to this present age; and know it to be the same books which the Prophets and Apostles writ, by an Infallible Testimony of rational men, friends and foes, in all ages. And for them that think that this lays all our faith on uncertainties,* I Ans. 1. *Let them give us more Certain Grounds.* 2. *We have an undoubted infallible Certainty of the Truth of this Tradition, as I have after shewed. He is mad that doubts of the Certainty of* VVil. *the Conquerer raigning in* Eng. *because he hath but humane Testimony. We are Certain that the Statutes of this land were made by the same Parliaments & Kings as are mentioned to be the Authors: & that these statutes which we have now in our Books are the same which they maed. For there were many copies dispersed: mens lands & estates were still held by them: there were multitudes of Lawyers and Judges whose calling lay in the continual use of them: & no one lawyer could corrupt them but his antagonist would soon tell him of it, and* 1000. *would find it out. So that I do not think any man doubteth of the certainty of these Acts, being the same they pretend to be. And in our case about the Scripture we have much more certainty, as I have shewed. These Copies were dispersed all over the World, so that a Cõbination to corrupt thẽ was impossible in secret: Men judged their hopes of salvation to lye in thẽ, & therefore would sure be careful to keep them from corruption, & to see that no other should do it: There were* 1000s. *of Ministers whose office and daily work it was to preach these Scriptures to the world, and therefore they must needs look to the preferring of them: and God was pleased to suffer such abundance of Hereticks to arise, (perhaps of purpose for this end, among others,)*

‖ *Origen against Celsus gives you many. vid. l.* 8. *& Augustin. de Civitat. Dei, l.* 22. *Et testimonium Porphyrii in Cyrilli l.* 10. *Contra Julianum: Et Hieronym. adverss. l. Vigilantii. Plura vide in Annotat. Grotii in l. de Verit. Religionis, præcipue in l.* 3.

that no one could corrupt the Scriptures but all his adversaries would soon have catcht him in it: For all parties, of each opinion, still pleaded the same Scriptures against all the rest; even as Lawyers plead the Laws of the Land at the bar against their adversaries. So that it is impossible that in any main matter it should be depraved. What it may be in a letter or a word by the negligence of transcribers, is of no great moment. (Of which I desire the learned Reader to peruse that accurate Treatise of the truly Learned and Judicious Ludovicus Capellus, *his* Critica Sacra.)

Indeed the Popish Doctrine of Tradition (such as you may find in Richworths *Dialogues) leads directly to Heathenisme; and builds all our Christianity on such certain uncertainties, yea palpable untruths, that it is a wonder that they who believe them renounce not their Christianity.*

But the great Objection *is, that by arguing thus, our Faith is finally resolved into humane Testimony, and so is but a humane faith.* Answ. *If I said that those that make this* Objection, *shew that they know not well what faith is, nor what the Resolving of it is, which they mention, I should not wrong them. But because I would give a satisfactory account of my Belief in this great point, I will more particularly answer the several Questions which use to be here reaised.*

Quest. Why do you Believe the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Christ, with all the rest of the articles or doctrines of your Faith?

Answ. *Because they are the Word of God; or, God hath Testified or reported them; or, hath Revealed them to the World as true, so that I have no higher or further reason to believe them to be true, but only this, God hath spoken them.*

Quest. How know you that God hath Revealed or Testified these things?

Answ. *There are many Questions comprehended in this one; or else it is very ambiguous. In regard of the* Object, *It is one thing to ask, How I know it to be Revealed? and another, How I know that it is God that Revealed it? In regard of the Act, the word* [How know you] *is doubtfull. You may either mean in your enquiry, By what principal Efficient Cause? or By what neerest efficient? or By what Motives or convincing Arguments? Or By what naturally requisite Means? Or What Instrument? All these must not be confounded.*

Quest.

Queſt. How know you (that is, by what moving Reaſons) that theſe things are Revealed?

Anſw. *I need not Arguments; my ſenſes of ſeeing and Hearing tell it me.*

Queſt. But how did the Prophets and Apoſtles know that they were Revealed to them?

Anſw. *Some by* Internal ſence (*who had it by inſpiration;*) *and ſome by external ſence, (who heard it from God or Chriſt or Angels, or read the tables which he wrote.)*

Queſt. How did the other Believers in thoſe time know, that theſe things were Revealed to the Prophets or Apoſtles?

Anſw. *By their own Teſtimony.*

Queſt. How know they that their Teſtimony was true.

Anſw. *I have anſwered this at large in the* 4 Chap. *and* 3. §. *If it had not been Revealed to them, they could not have Revealed it to others.*

Queſt. But how do we in theſe times know that theſe things were Revealed to the Apoſtles?

Anſw. *Some few parte of the World know it only by unwritten Tradition: But moſt of all the Churches know it by the Scripture which thoſe holy men wrot, containing thoſe Doctrines.*

Queſt. But how know you that theſe Scriptures were written by them?

Anſw. *By infallible* **Tradition.*

Queſt. But how know you that they be not in the ſubſtance corrupted ſince?

Anſw. *By the ſame infallible Tradition aſſuring my Reaſon of it: Even as I know that the Statutes of the Land were made by thoſe Kings and Parliaments whoſe names they bear: and as I know that the Works of* Ariſtotle, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, &c. *were made by them, and are not in the ſubſtance corrupted. Yea, far greater certainly doth Tradition afford me.*

Queſt. But though you are thus aſſured of the Revelation, yet, How know you it is Divine? Or that it was God indeed that did Reveal it?

Anſw. 1. *You muſt know (as preſuppoſed) that themſelves affirm that God revealed this to them, both by their ſpeech to thoſe that heard them preach; and by this Scripture, which affirms it ſelf to be of Divine Inſpiration.*

* See *Chemnit. Exam. Concil. Trident. Part.* 1. pag. (*mihi*) 113. out of *Origen Euſebius* and *Auſtin*, ſhewing the uſe of this ſort of Tradition.

Queſt. But how did they know themſelves that they were not miſtaken?

Anſw. 1. *Thoſe whom God inſpired, or to whom he ſpake, knew certainly by an unexpreſſible ſenſe, that it was God himſelf and no deluſion. God never ſpeaks ſo extraordinarily, but by the ſame act he both makes known the thing Revealed, and himſelf to be the Speaker.* 2. *Beſides, they were fully certain it was no deluſion, by the frequent, uncontroled Miracles which Chriſt did, and which he enabled them to do themſelves. See more Chap. 4. §. 3. where this is fullier anſwered.*

Queſt. But how ſhall we know that they delude us not; and that the Scripture ſaith true in affirming it ſelf to be of Divine Inſpiration? For we muſt not believe every perſon or book that ſo affirmeth?

Anſw. *I have anſwered this in the forecited Chapter and Section.*

To which I add: 1. * *There are ſuch Characters of Verity and Majeſty in the Scriptures themſelves that may very ſtrongly perſwade us of the Verity of them, at leaſt, as being exceeding probable. Eſpecially, the exceeding ſpirituality and Purity of them, and the High ſtrange deſign of God manifeſted about the way of advanceing his glory, and ſaving mankind; which Deſign in all the parts of it, excellently concatenated, was not laid open by one perſon only, nor in one only age; but was in doing many 100 years, and opened by many ſeveral perſons at that diſtance, ſo that it is impoſſible that they ſhould lay their heads together to contrive it. Alſo the fulfilled Prophecies, ſhew its Verity. And if any one part have not theſe Characters ſo Evidently on it, yet it is certain, becauſe it is atteſted by the reſt (or ſome of them) that have them.* 2. *But that which fully perſwades me, (being thus prepared by the Quality of the Writings,) is, The many, Apparent uncontroled Miracles* * *which the Apoſtles themſelves did work, who wrote theſe Books: God would not have enabled them to confirm a falſe deluding Teſtimony (and that of ſuch moment) by Miracles, and ſuch Miracles.* 3. *And, when I have once thus Believed, I am much confirmed, both by the experience I have of the power and ſweet reliſh of the doctrine of the Scriptures on my own ſoul; and the efficacy of it on the ſouls of others; and alſo in that I find all the rational cauſes of doubting of the truth of Scripture, to be removed.*

* *Vide Greg. de Valentia Anal. fidei, lib. 1. cap. 25. Et Junil. de parte Divin. Legis, lib. 2. cap. 27.*

* *Phlegon in lib. 13.* of his Annals, confeſſeth the Miracles done by *Peter*, as *Origen* ſaith *lib. 2. contra Celſum.*

Queſt.

Queſt. But when you make Miracles your great Argument, How know you that thoſe Miracles were indeed wrought?

Anſw. *By infallible Tradition, partly by the Inſtrumentality of Scripture, and partly by other writings, and univerſal confeſſion: as I know that* Julius Cæſar *conquered* Pompey, *and* William *the* Norman *woon* England.

Queſt. But did you at firſt believe the Scripture on theſe Grounds? Or can it be expected that unlearned people ſhould underſtand the certainty of this Tradition?

Anſw. 1. *I firſt Believed that the Scripture was Gods Word, meerly upon the Common uncontradicted Affirmation of my Teachers: And ſo do moſt others that I meet with: And ſo proceed to ſee the more certain Arguments afterwards.* 2. *Yet if they were wiſely and diligently taught them, the unlearned are capable of knowing the infallible certainty of that Tradition: Yea, and the certainty of the truth of the Tranſlation in the ſubſtance; and that you do read truly the Scriptures to them, &c. For there is a Humane Teſtimony which is Certain; and ſo a Humane Faith: Yea, more Certain then my own Senſe. Senſe hath alway greater Evidence then Belief, but not ſo great certainty ſometimes. I will rather Believe ten thouſand ſober, impartiall Witneſſes that ſay, they ſee or hear ſuch a thing, (having no conſiderable contradiction,) then I would believe mine own eyes or ears for the contrary.*

Queſt. But is that Faith Divine and ſaving, when men take the Scripture for Gods Word meeerly on Report, or other weak Arguments?

Anſw. *It is a Faith that lies open to great danger by temptation, when the Weakneſs of the Grounds ſhall appear: and will have much Weakneſs in the mean time: but yet it may be Divine and ſaving. For ſtill this mans Faith is reſolved into Gods Veracity or Authority. Though on weak Grounds he take the Scripture to be Revealed by God, yet he Believes it to be* True, *only becauſe God ſpoke or Revealed it. So that the error not lying in the Formal or Material Object of Faith, but only in the Arguments perſwading that it is from God, this deſtroyes not the ſoundneſs and Truth of the Belief.*

Object. But how know we that the Miracles were wrought to confirm the truth of theſe books?

Anſw. *They were Wrought to confirm the Teſtimonie of men, Whether delivered by Word or Writing. And this by*

Writing is that part of their Teſtimony which the Church now enjoyeth.

Object. But all that wrote the Scripture, did not work Miracles.

Anſw. *Their Teſtimony is confirmed by thoſe that did.*

Queſt. Into what then do you ultimately Reſolve your Faith?

Anſw. *If you underſtand the pharſe of* [*Reſolving Faith*] *ſtrictly and properly, ſo it is Reſolved only into the credit or Veracity of the Speaker, as being the Cauſe of the Verity of the Propoſition which I believe, even the principal Efficient Cauſe; the Knowledge of whoſe Infallible Verity, doth, above all (and only in that kinde) cauſe me to Believe the things Revealed to be True.*

But if you take the phraſe of [*Reſolving Faith*] *in the largeſt ſence, as it containeth not only its Reſolution into its Formal Object, but into all its Cauſes in their ſeveral kinds, ſo it is Reſolved thus.* 1. *As I have ſaid, I Reſolve my Faith into the* Prime Truth, *that is, into Gods infallible Veracity as the only* Formal Object, *or full proper efficient of the Verity of the Propoſitions believed, and the Principal Reaſon of my Belief.* 2. *I Reſolve my Belief into Gods* [*Revelation, or Teſtimony*] *as the* Principium Pateſactionis, *or the Naturally-neceſſary meanes of Application of the Former, which is the* Principium Certitudinis (*It is* Rob. Baronius *own diſtinction,* Apodix. Tract. 3. Cap. 6. p. 123.) *Yet I am forced to diſſent from* Baronius *in that he makes this* [*Revelation*] *to be part of the Formal Object: Though* [*Gods Veracity or Gods Revealing,*] *and not the Truth of God without Revelation, be the Formal Object of Belief: yet I conceive the ſaid Revelation to be no part of the Formal Object, but a Natural Meanes of the production of the Material Object by the Formal Object which is its Efficient: And that not directly of the Immediate Material Object, but of the Remote only. For the Immediate Material Object is* [*the Truth*] *of Propoſitions: and the Remote, is* [*the Propoſition*] *which is True. Now* [*the Revelation is directly a Production of* [*the Propoſition*] *as ſuch; but not of the Verity of it directly: We therefore Believe it to be True, becauſe the* True God *ſpoke it. Though in a ſecond place the Pateſaction may be ſaid to produce the Verity of the thing.* 3. *I Reſolve my Belief into the Characters of Divinity which are found in Scripture, and into the uncontrolled Miracles by which it was atteſted, as the Principal motives (conjunct) by which I am perſwaded that it was God, and no other, that*

Was

was the Author or Revealer. 4. *I Resolve my Belief into Humane Testimony or Infallible Tradition (Rationally, not Authoritatively Infallible) as the means of discovering to me matters of Fact,* viz. *that the Apostles did Write: that, This delivered to me is The Writing: that it is All: that such Miracles were wrought: that the Scriptures are not Depraved in any material point, or out of Design: which Books, are Canonical, and which not. Had I been the person to whom God from heaven, or Christ on Earth did Reveal these Truths Immediately, then this Resolution of my Faith should have been into my senses (made use of Rationally): I should have known by External sense, what Christ spoke, and what not; What Miracles he did: and by Internal sense, that it was God and no other that Inspired me: and by both, that it was Christ, and no other that spake and workt Miracles. But seeing I live at so great a distance, and God Revealed not these things to me Immediately, but to the Apostles, and they to others, and they to others, and so down to this day; therefore Tradition must do that for me which sense did to the first Receivers: as I say, what sense did for them, that Humane Testimony doth for us; or must carry it between their senses and our senses, and so to our Reason.* 5. *I Resolve my Belief into all Truths Revealed in Scripture, into the Material Object (If it were not too improper to call that a Resolving of it into that which answers the* Quid Credis? *and not the* Cur Credis? *or the* Cui?) 6. *I Resolve it into the Books or writings, as the Authentick Instrument Revealing Gods mind: Not into the words as in this or that language, or as considered in themselves; but as considered in Relation to the Truths which they express,* viz. *as they are signifiers of all those Enunciations which they contain.* 7. *I Resolve my Belief into Reason or my Understanding, as the neerest vital efficient Cause.* 8. *I Resolve it into the Holy Ghosts Illumination or Grace as into the Remote and former Efficient, enabling and causing me to Believe sincerely and savingly (but not into any Internal Testimony of the spirit as the* Object *of my faith.)*

(I know our Baronius *opposeth* Spalatensis *for one of the points which I here assert (*Apolog. Tract. 9. punct. 4. and 5. pag. 711. 712. 713. 714. &c.*) Were it not that I have been too tedious already, I would answer those Arguments of* Baronius, *which is very easie to do: but to the unprejudiced and considerate I think it will seem needless or at least is fitter for another discourse.*

And

And thus having Catechiſed my ſelf, to give men an account of my Belief, and help thoſe that are weaker herein. I ſhall conclude all with two or three Words of Advice to the Reader.

1. BEware that you exclude not, in your arguing, any Cauſe or neceſſary Medium of your Faith. By quarrelling too eagerly with other mens grounds, many men run upon this dangerous Rock, Leſt they ſhould give too much to Reaſon, or to Tradition, or the Church, or Miracles, ſome further exclude them then will ſtand with the Rationality and ſafety and Honor of Chriſtianity; ſet not thoſe things in Oppoſition, which may and muſt conſiſt in coordination, or ſubordination to others.

The removal of one neceſſary Cauſe may deſtroy the Effect, or of one Pillar, may pull down the houſe; or of one of the neceſſary parts, may kill the man; though all the reſt be let alone, or more regarded then before. It is no whit derogatory to the Law of the Land, to ſay, I muſt read it with my eyes, and by the help of Spectacles, and muſt receive it with my hands, or ears, from a Herald or other Proclaimer, &c.

2. *Take heed of denying the Perfection of Scripture in Deed, while you maintain it in words. Two ſorts I would warn of this.*

1. *Thoſe that plead for Traditional Doctrines not contained in Scripture. To theſe I have ſpoken elſewhere (Appendix to Treat. of Baptiſm.)*

* *Unde iſta Traditio? utrumne de dominica & Evangelica Authoritate deſcendens? an de Apoſtolorum Mandatis atq; Epiſtolis veniens? Ea enim faciendа eſſe quæ ſcripta ſunt Deus teſtatur ad Joſhuam; Non recedet Liber legis ex ore tuo, &c. ſi ergo aut Evangelio præcipitur, aut in Apoſtolorum Epiſtolis, aut Actibus continetur, obſervetur Divina hæc & ſancta Traditio. Quæ iſta obſtinatio, quæve præſumptio, humanam Traditionem Divinæ diſpoſitioni anteponere? nec animadvertere indignari & traſci Deum, quoties Divina præcepta ſolvit & præterit Humana Traditio?* Mar. 7. 8. 1 Tim. 6. 3. *Conſuetudo ſine veritate, Vetuſtas erroris eſt; propter quod relicto errore ſequamur veritatem.* Cypriani. Epiſt. 74. ad Pomp. pag. 229. 231. The ſame place of Cyprian is vindicated by Dr. *Whitaker de ſac. Script. Cont.* 1. *Q.* 6. *de perfect. Script.* mentioned alſo by *Gonlartius* on *Cypr.* ibid.

2. *Thoſe*

2. *Those that are so eager* ||*to tye all men to* their *Expositions of Scripture, and censure all for Heretical that differ from them therein; When we have disputed and contended our selves aweary, and wrangled the Church into flames and ashes; yet that which God hath spoken obscurely, and so left difficult in it self, Will remain obscure and difficult still. And that which is difficult through the Weaknes and incapacity of unlearned men, will be far better cleared by a rational explication, then by a bare Canon. O when Will the Lord ence perswade his Churches to take his Written Word for the only Canon of their Faith! and that in its own naked simplicity and Evidence, Without the determinations and Canons of men! which are no parts of our Creed, but helps to our understandings, and bounds to our Practice in matters Circumstantial, which God hath left to mans determination; when will the Lord perswade us, not to be Wise above what is written? but to acknowledge that which is unrevealed in the Word, to be beyond us; and that which is more darkly revealed to be more doubtful to us. Then the hot contentions of the Church about the Mysteries of Gods Decrees, and nature and order of his immanent Acts; the nature and way of the Workings of the Spirit on the Soul, &c. with a hundred quarrels about meer names and words, Will be more lovingly and brotherly debated, Without such alienation of affections, and reproachful expressions.*

Two things have set the Church on fire and been the plagues of it

|| *Doctissimi Nazianzen consilium ab omnibus Christianis audiendum* [*Divina contemplare, verum in terminis maneto: Loquere quæ sunt Spiritus, & si Possibile est, nihil aliud. Næ Patrus naturam nimis curiose rimator, Unigeniti essentiam, spiritus gloriam; unam in tribus Deitatem: Utere verbis consuetis. Ratio pertineat ad sapientiores. Sufficiat tibi ut habeas fundamentum; superædificent artifices.*] *Utinam soli artifices superædificarent! Utinam superstructiones suas multas & pæne infinitas cum paucis & planis fundamentalibus pari affectu & honore suscipiendas, non commiscerent! Si hoc conentur, decet tamen pios & prudentes Christianos discernere, inter prima illa pauca Credibilia à Christo & Apostolis immediate revelata, & innumeras illas Deductiones Theologorum pro cujusq; ingenio & opinione cum fundamentalibus in eundum locum contrusas.* Davenant. Adhort. *pro pace* Eccles. pag 87. 88. It was found Counsel that *Powerannus* gives the Ministers of Gods Word (*ne tot articulis, &c.*) That they should not with so many Articles and Creeds and Confessions confound the minds of plain Christians, but that they should draw up the sume of their Belief into some few heads. Nothing hinders but that professors and Licentiates in Divinity may busie their thoughts and spend their hours upon the knotty and abstruse Questions of that sacred Faculty; but why should the heads of ordinary Christians be troubled with those curious disquisitions? Dr. *Hall* Peacemaker, *Sect.* 16. *pag.* 118. 119. I pray read the rest of that small Treatise: and his *Pax terris* a smaller, but both worthy all our serious studying.

Read *Ushers* excellent Sermon on *Ephes.* 4. 13. before King *James* Jun. 20. 1624. throughout.

above one thousand years. 1. *Enlarging our Creed and making more fundamentals then ever God* * *made.*

2. *Composing (and so imposing) our Creeds and Confessions in our own Words and phrases.*

When Men have learned more manners and humility then to accuse Gods language as too general and obscure (as if they could mend it) and have more dread of God, and compassion on themselves then to make those to be Fundamentals or certainties which God never made so; And when they reduce their Confessions 1. to their due extent, and 2. to Scripture phrase (that Dissenters may not scruple subscribing) then, and (I think) never till then, shall the Church have Peace about Doctrinals. || *It seems to me no hainous* Socinian *motion, which* Chillingworth *is blamed for,* viz. [Let all men believe the Scripture, and that only, and endevor to believe it in the true sense (and promise this) and require no more of others, and they shall find this not only a better, but the only means to suppress Heresie, and restore Unity, &c.]

If you say, Men may subscribe to Scripture, and yet misinterpret them, I answer, so they may do by humane Canons. If you say, They may preach against Fundamentals or Evident Truths, while yet they subscribe to the Scripture misunderstood, I answ. 1. *All such Weighty Truths are delivered expresly or very plainly.* 2. *I hope God will once not only bring into use the Ministerial Power, but also teach Magistrates to rule for Christ, to the restraining of such as shall so palpably offend as openly to contradict what they subscribe.*

But that was the third and last word of advice I here intended, viz. *that seeing Scripture is the sacred Perfect Law of the most high God, that men would use it Reverently, and that Magistrates would restrain men that would bring Gods Word into contempt under*

* *Ausim confirmare, majorem tam veterum hæresium, quam præsentium dissidiorum partem, in Ecclesia hinc præcipue natam fuisse & esse, quod Concilia, Episcopi, Doctores Ecclesiæ, nullo discrimine, quævis Scholarum dogmata, & Cathedrarum placita pro articulis fidei Catholicæ venditarunt; pariq; ad salutem necessitate credenda conscientiis imposuerunt: ex quavis vero interpretationis Scripturarum discrepantia, minis saciè hæreses vel Schismata fecerunt.* Paræus *in Irenic.* pag. (mihi) 16. Vide & pag. 15. & 41. All Peace-making Divines still harp upon this string, and yet some call it *Socinian.* If any would see more of the Evil of making points necessary which God made not so, you may throughout *Conrad. Bergius* his *Prax. Cathol.* see enough, and the words of very many Divines, *Lutherans* and *Calvinists,* to that end.

|| *Chillingworth,* Page last of the Preface, shall men be judged *Socinians* for advancing the Scriptures as the only Rule?

I pray read well what that excellent Divine Doctor *Stoughton* hath written expresly and earnestly for what I now urge, in his Form of wholsom Words, about forming Church-Confessions.

pretence

pretence of Preaching it, * *That every ignorant fellow, whose tongue hath catcht a Lax, may not run up into the Pulpit to eaſe himſelf; Nor every one have leave to diſgorge himſelf in the holy Aſſemblies, that hath got a ſurfit of Pride and ſelf-conceit. O if you knew the weakneſs of poor people, and how apt they are to be deceived, you would not give deceivers liberty to do their worſt. You that will not give men leave to perſwade your Wives to Adultery, your Children to lewdneſs, your Souldiers or Subjects to Rebellion or Treachery, would ſure be as regardful of mens ſouls, and the honour of Chriſt. And you that will not give every fool leave to go in your names on an Embaſſage, who would but diſgrace you; would not let men ſpeak publikely as in the name of Chriſt, that cannot ſpeak ſence, to the ſhame of our profeſſion; Nor ſhould men turn Preachers as the River* Nilus *breeds Frogs, (ſaith* Herodotus,*) when one half moveth before the other is made. and while it is yet but plain mud.*

But I muſt make this Preface no longer. I pray obſerve that in the Margin, and ſee whether our times be not like Tertullians.

* *Ordinationes eorum temerariæ, leves, inconſtantes: nunc neophytos collocant, nunc ſeculo obſtrictos, nunc Apoſtatas noſtros, ut Gloriâ eos obligent, quia Veritate non poſſunt: Nuſquam facilius proficitur quam in caſtris rebelliũ, ubi ipſum eſſe illic, promereri eſt. Itaq; alius hodie Epiſcopus, cras alius; hodie Diaconus, qui cras Lector: hodie Presbyter, qui cras Laicus: Nam & Laicis Sacerdotalia Munera injunguntur.* Tertullian. de Præſcription. adverſ. hæret.

Reader, *As thou loveſt thy Comforts, thy Faith, thy Hope, thy Safety, thine Innocency, thy Soul, thy Chriſt, thine Everlaſting Reſt; Love, Reverence, Read, Study, Obey, and ſtick cloſe to Scripture.* Farewel.

April. 2. 1651.

OF
SINCERITY.

OF SINCERITY.

A more exact enquiry into the number and use of Marks, the nature of Sincerity, with other things of great moment in the work of Self-examination.

SECT. I.

§. 1. IT is a matter of such unexpressible consequence for every man to make sure work in the great business of his Salvation; it being so Easie, so Ordinary, and so Dangerous to be Mistaken, that I think fit yet to add some further advice, to help men in the Triall of their own states. There is no Christian that hath any care of his Soul, or any Belief and true sense of the matters of Eternity, but must needs be very solicitous in enquiring, *How he may know what will become of him for ever and ever?* and be glad of a cleer undeceiving Direction for the

the Discovery of this. As I lay under seven years doubting and perplexity of spirit my self, much through my ignorance in the managing of this work, so was I very inquisitive still after signes of Sincerity, and I got all the Books that ever I could buy, which laid down Evidences and Marks of true Grace, and tended to discover the Difference betwixt the true Christian and the Hypocrite or Unsound: I liked no Sermon so well as that which contained most of these Marks: And afterward when I was called to the Ministry my self, I preached in this way as much as most. I have heard as many complaints of Doubting, distressed Souls as most: and had as many that have opened their hearts to me in this point; of whom many have proved the most humble, self-denying mortified Christians; and many that were deepest in doubtings and distress, upon triall of their lives, I found also deepest in Pride, Peevishness, unmortified Lusts, and unfaithfull Walking, which did feed their troubles. Upon this long experience of my self and others, and most serious study of this point, and prayer to God for his direction, I think it but my duty to open yet more fully for the benefit of others, what I have herein discovered which is necessary for them to understand in this weighty work: For one Error here may put the hearts and lives of godly people quite out of frame, and may do much to the confirming of the wicked in their Presumption and self-deceit. I shall therefore lay down what I conceive to be the Truth in certain Propositions.

SECT. II. §. 2.

Propos. 1. *A Sincere Christian may attain to an Infallible Knowledge of his own Sincerity in Grace, or in his performance of the Conditions of the Covenant of Life, and consequently of his Justification, Adoption, and title to Glory: and this without any extraordinary Revelation.* *Prop. 1.*

This Proposition I have proved before, and therefore need to say no more to it now. I lay it down here by way of Caution to prevent mistakes, lest any should think that I am against an attainment of Assurance here, because of some passages following.

SECT. III.

§. 3.

Prop. 2.

Propos. 2. *This Infallible Knowledge is not properly a Certainty of Faith, (as too many Divines affirm.)*

This also I have proved before in opening the Nature of Assurance, and in the Appendix of my Aphorisms of Justification. And Mr *Wotton de Reconcil.* and very many learned Divines of late have confirmed it fully. Proper Certainty of Faith, is when a man by meer Believing is sure of the Truth of the thing Believed: This therefore leaneth fully on a Divine Testimony. But there is no Divine Testimony revealing that such or such a mans sins are pardoned, or he Justified. The Testimony of the Spirit is but partly by Giving us the Conditions of the Promise, which is our Evidence, and partly helping us to see them, and conclude from them, and take comfort therein. And so it witnesseth with our Consciences, by causing our Consciences spiritually and effectually to witness. But this Testimony is not the Object of Faith: It is only Gods Testimony in * Scripture which affords us a Certainty of Faith properly Divine in this point. (Though in other cases Natural Discoveries may be truly called a Divine Testimony in a larger sense; yet this is above nature:) Now Gods Word doth only say, He that Repenteth and Believeth, shall be pardoned, and justified, and saved: but no where saith, that you or I shall be saved. *Object.* But (you will say) as long as we may know that we Believe, is it not all one? *Answ.* No: For Gods Word tels me not that I Believe, therefore this must be known by Reflection and Internal sense, and not by Believing. He that Believeth he doth Believe, Believeth himself and not God: for God no where telleth him so; so then it is beyond doubt, that Assurance (as I said before) ariseth from the Conclusion, one of whose Premises is in the Word of God, and must be Believed: the other is in our own Hearts and must be felt or known: and therefore the Conclusion is mixt, and to be deduced by Reason, and is not an Object properly of Divine Faith, or of any Faith at all. There is but one Objection that seems to me to have any appearance of strength to take with any reasonable man: and

Lege Amesii Coron. de *Art.* 5. *cap.* 1. *Coroll.* 6, 7. *pag.* (*mihi*) 288. *eadem quæ Theologi in Synodo tradentem.*

* Supposing that other ways of Revelation are ceased.

Assensum quippe nostrum afficiunt fidei catholicæ Articuli, ut principia immediata, ac prima. Fides autem subjungitur per modum assumptionis. Illius ergo quæ hanc persuasionem facit, conclusionis non potest esse firmitudo major, quã quæ præmissarum debiliori inest. Subsumptio autem illa experimentalibus nititur judiciis, per privatam hominis conscientiam pensitatis. Quæ cum nonnunquam in dubium vocentur, an sint signa genuina & sæpe tentationum nube occultentur, ne ad præsens solatium effulgeant, quid mirum si non, &c. Thologi. Britann. *in Synod. Dordr. Suffrag. ad Art* 5. *Thes* 3. &c.

that

that ſome think cannot be anſwered. And thus they argue, Whatſoever we ask of God through Chriſt according to his Will, we muſt Believe we ſhall Receive: But we ask Juſtification and Glorie of God according to his Will through Chriſt: Therefore we muſt Believe we ſhall receive them.] *Anſ.* This makes not our Juſtification and Salvation to be upon Certaintie of Faith. For, 1. The major Propoſition doth only expreſs a conditional Promiſe of Juſtification and Salvation, and no Abſolute promiſe. Now a Conditional Promiſe puts nothing in Being, till the performance of the Condition, nor gives any Certainty but on ſuch performance. The Condition here expreſſed, is, That we ask, and that we ask according to Gods Will: which implies many other Conditions: For it muſt be in Faith and Repentance, and to right Ends, not *to conſume it on our Luſts* (ſaith *James*) and we muſt be Certain that we are ſincere in all this, before we can upon this Conditional Promiſe have a Certainty. 2. So that the minor Propoſition here (That we thus Ask according to Gods Will in true Faith, *&c.*) This no Scripture ſpeaks; and therefore muſt be known otherwiſe then by Believing. 3. Yet we may be ſaid to Believe we ſhall Receive, in reference to the major Propoſition or Promiſe in Scripture, which is an Object of our Belief.

SECT. IV.

§. 4.

Propoſ. 3. *THough Infallible Aſſurance, as aforeſaid, may be here attained, yet perfect Certainty in Degree cannot; nor may lawfully be by any man expected.*

Prop. 3. Read of this our Britiſh Divines in the Synod of *Dort. in ſuffrag. ad Art.* 5 *Theſ.* 2. *&* 3. excellently and moderately (as they did in all).

This alſo I have proved before. For if we may be Perfect in the Degree of Aſſurance, why not of all Grace as well? and ſo have no ſin? Nay there are ſo many Graces exerciſed in producing our Aſſurance (beſides Reaſon it ſelf) that if they be not firſt perfect, it is impoſſible, that Aſſurance ſhould be Perfect. For Example: He that Believeth not in Perfection the Truth of Scripture, and of that Promiſe, That [*Whoſoever Believeth ſhall be ſaved.*] 2. And he that knoweth not in Perfection, the ſincerity of his own Faith (neither of which any man breathing doth do;) cannot poſſibly be Perfectly Certain, that he is Juſtified,

and shall be saved. For who can be Perfectly Certain of the Conclusion, who is but Imperfectly Certain of the Premises? And yet I have met with some men that think themselves very learned and spiritual, that confidently Dispute for a Perfection in Assurance. If any man say [That *Bellarmine* meant as much as this Imperfect Certainty, when he grants a Conjectural Certainty;] and be sure that he speaks truly; I will like *Bellarmine* the better, and his opposers in this the worse; but I will like a plain necessary Truth of God never the worse. Sure I am that our great Divines affirming, That we are sure of Salvation by a certainty of Faith, hath given the Papists fearfull ground to baffle them and play upon us, and triumph over them. And when their own Students and followers finde it so, it hardens them against us fearfully. And as sure I am, that no man is Perfect gradually in this life in any Grace, much less in so high a point as his Assurance. Among all those Consciences that I have had opened to me, I never met with an humble, heavenly, upright Christian, that would say, He was perfectly Certain: (Nay, and but few that durst call their Perswasion A Certainty, but rather a strong Hope:) But some licentious, fantastical Disputers, I have heard plead for such a Perfect Certainty; whose Pride and loose Living and unmortified Passions and corruptions, told the standers-by, that they were the furthest from true Certainty of any.

The Conclusion follows the weaker part of the Premises, say Logicians. *Vide Smigletii Logicam Disput. 13. Quæst. 8. 12, 13. ubi strenuè probatur, præmissæ alterius debilitatem, semper & in omni materia, redundare in conclusionem.*

SECT. V.

§. 5.

Prop. 4.

Propos. 4. *THough in some Cases it may be usefull to name several Marks: Yet the true infallible Marks of Sincerity, which a man may gather Assurance from, are very few, and lie in a narrower room then most have thought.*

As I would not pick quarrels with the most Godly Divines, who lay down many Marks of Sincerity in their Sermons and Books; so would I not in foolish tenderness of any mans Reputation be so cruel to the Souls of poor Christians as to hide the Truth from them in so weighty a point, and I speak against no man more then my self (heretofore.) I know ordinary Christians cannot discern how these multitudes of Marks do lie open to exceptions: but the Judicious may easily perceive it, I shall therefore

fore here tell you the Truth, how far these many Marks are commendable and convenient, and how farre they are condemnable and dangerous. And, 1. When we are only discovering the Nature of some *sinne*, rather then the Certainty of the sinner, it is both easie and usefull to give many signs, as from the Effects, &c. by which it may be known, what that sin is; and so men may know how far they are guilty of it. But to know certainly whether that sin will prove the Damnable state of the sinner, is neither easie (in most cases) nor to be done by many Marks.

2. When we are discovering the Nature of some Duty or Grace (and not the very point wherein the Souls sincerity in that Grace or Duty lieth) it is both easie and usefull to give many Marks of them. But by these no man can gather Assurance of his sincerity.

3. When we are describing a high Degree of wickedness, which is far from the best state of an unregenerate man, it is both easie and usefull to give plain Marks of such a state. But to discover just how much sin will stand with true Grace, is another matter.

4. When we are describing the estate of the strongest Christians, it is easie and usefull to Mark them out, and to give many Marks of their strength: But to give many of their Truth; and to discover the least degree of true Grace, is not easie. So I have shewed you wherein Marks may commendably be multiplied: But to lay down many Marks of sincerity, and say, By these you may certainly know whether you shall be saved or not: This I dare not do.

SECT. VI.

§. 6.

Propos. 5. *THere is a three-fold Truth to be enquired after in Examination:* 1. *The Truth of the* Act *or* Habit. 2. *The Moral Truth of it as a* Grace *or* Duty. 3. *The Moral Truth of it as a* Saving *or* Justifying *Grace or Duty: or as the Condition of Justification and Salvation. It is the last of these three only that the great business in Self-examination lieth on, and which we are now searching after: The two first being presupposed as more easily discernable, and less controvertible.*

Prop. 5.

Lege Aquin. sum. de Veritate. c. 1. & 2, &c. accuratissimè de Veri & Veritatis definitione.

I will not here trouble plain Readers, for whose sakes I write, with any Scholastick Enquires into the nature of Truth, but on-

ly look into so much as is of flat necessity to a right managing of the work of Self-examination. For it is unconceivable how a man should rationally judge of his own Condition, when he knows not what to enquire after: or that he should clearly know his sincerity, who knows not what sincerity is. Yet I doubt not but by an *internal feeling* a strong sound Christian who hath his Faith and Love, and other Graces in Action, may comfortably perceive the sincerity of his Graces, though he be so ignorant, as not *clearly and distinctly* to know the Nature of sincerity, or to give any just Description of it: Even as an unlearned man that is of a sound and healthful body, may feel what Health is, when he cannot describe it, nor tell *distinctly* wherein it doth consist. But yet as he hath a *general* Knowledge of it, so hath this ignorant sincere Christian of the Nature of sincerity. And withal, this is a more dangerous ground to stand on, because our sense is so uncertain in this case more then in the welfare of the body; and the Assurance of such a soul will be more defective and imperfect, and very unconstant, who goes by meer Feeling without knowing the nature of what he feeleth. Even as the forementioned unlearned man in case of bodily health, if he have no knowledge, but meer feeling of the nature of health; He will be cast down with a Tooth-ake, or some harmless disease if it be painful, as if he should presently die, when a knowing man could tell that there is no danger, and he would make light of a Hectick, or other Mortal disease till it be uncurable, because he feels no great pain in it. It is therefore a matter of Necessity to open most clearly and distinctly the Nature of sincerity or Truth, so far as concerns the case in hand. I told you before that there is a Metaphysical Truth of Being, and a Moral. I now adde further, that here are three things to be enquired after: 1. The Truth of the Act. 2. The Truth of the Virtuousness or Goodness of the Act. 3. The Truth of the Justifying or savingness of the Act. The first is of Natural consideration: The two last of Moral Consideration. As for example: If you be trying the sinceritie of your Love to God: You must first know that you do love him indeed without dissembling: 2. That this Love be such as is a Dutie or Good, which God requireth. 3. That this Love be such as will certainly prove you in a state of Salvation. The first of these (whether you Believe and Love Christ or not) must

must needs be first known. And this must be known by internal Feeling joined with a consideration of the Effects of Real Love. And to this end many Marks may be useful, though indeed inward feeling must do almost all: No man else can tell me whether I Believe and Love, if I cannot tell my self. It is no hard matter to a solid knowing Christian to discern this ordinarily. But when they do know this, they are far enough from true Assurance, except they go to the rest. A man may be a *True Man*, and not an Image, or a shadow, or a corps: and yet be a false Thief, or a Liar, and no True Man in a Moral sense. This I lay down to these uses:

First, That you take heed when you hear or read Marks of Grace, how you receive and apply them: and enquire whether it be not onely the Truth of the Being of the Act or Habit that those Marks discover, rather then the *virtuous*, or the saving Being or Force.

Secondly, That you take heed in Examination of taking up at this first step, as if when you have found that you Believe, and Love, and Repent, you had found all: when yet you have not found that you do it *Savingly*.

Thirdly, To take heed of the Doctrine of many called Orthodox great Divines, in this: who tell you, That, Every man that hath Faith, knows he hath it: and it is impossible to Believe, and not to know we Believe. This may ordinarily (but not alway) be true about this first *Truth*, of the meer Being of the Act. But is it not a wonder that these great learned Divines should not consider, that this is but a presupposed matter, and not the great thing that we have to enquire after in point of sinceritie? and that they may know they *Believe* long enough, and yet not know their Faith to be *Saving*? It is our beyond-Sea Divines that so mistake in this Point: Our *English* Divines are sounder in it, then any in the world generally: I think, because they are more practical, and have had more wounded tender consciences under

Lege Rivet. *Disput. de Certitud. salutis* §. 33. *pag.* 248, 249. Even Learned *Testardus* is thus mistaken. *De Natura & Grat. pag.* 142. *Thes.* 180. whose words I will give you that you may see what way others go, in him. If any man feel that he Believeth, (for felt it is, and that most certainly of him that believeth) and be perswaded of the Veracity of God & Christ, that man cannot choose but certainly conclude with himself that his sins are pardoned, and life eternal shall be given him. He therefore that professeth himself uncertain of the pardon of his sins, and of his Salvation, doth in vain boast that he is a Believer. Certainly he that is not certain of the pardon of his sins, and of his Salvation, which is the Conclusion of the Syllogism of Faith, is either ignorant of what is contained in the major; or else doth not take it for certain (which yet is the word of God and Christ:) or else it must needs be that he doth not feel that he Believes: And how then can he be called a Believer? Thus *Testardus* erreth with too many more.

cure, and less empty speculation and dispute. The second Truth to be enquired after, is, That this Act is Truly Good or a Virtue or Grace. For every Act is not a Virtue. Nor every Act that may seem so. I will not stand here curiously to open to you, wherein the Goodness of an Action doth consist. Somewhat will be said in the following Propositions opened. Only this much at the present. To denominate an Action properly and fully Good, it must be fully agreeable to Gods Will of Precept, both in the Matter, End, Measure, and all Circumstances. But improperly and imperfectly it may be called Good or Virtuous, though there be Evil mixt, if the Good be most eminent: as if the substance of the Action be Good, though the Circumstances be Evil: and thus we ordinarily call Actions Good: But if the Evil be so predominant, as that the Good lie only in Ends or Circumstances, and the substance (as it were) of the Action be forbidden, then we may not call it a Good Action, or a Grace or Duty. So that it is not perfect proper Goodness, that I here speak of: but the second, that is, imperfect: when the Action is commanded and Good in it self, and the Good more eminent then the Evil: Yet it may not be saving for all that.

For there is a common Grace which is not saving, yet *Real* and so *True* and *Good*, and so True *Grace*: as well as a special Grace, which is saving: and there are common Duties commanded by God, as Alms-deeds, Fasting, Prayer, *&c.* which though they are necessary, yet Salvation doth not certainly accompany them or follow them. A man that findes any Moral Virtue to be in himself Truly, and to be Truly a Virtue; cannot thence conclude that he shall be saved: Nor a man that Truly doth a Duty Truly Good in it self. Many did that which was Good in the sight of the Lord, but not with an upright heart: And even an *Ahabs* Humiliation may have some Moral Goodness, and so some Acceptance with God, and bring some benefit to himself, and yet not be Saving nor Justifying.

And some Actions again may be so depraved by the End and Manner, that they deserve not the name of Good, or Duty. As to Repent of a sinfull Attempt, is in it self considered a Duty and Good: But if a man Repent of it only, because it did not succeed, or because he mist of the Gain, or Pleasure, or Honour which he expected by it: Thus he makes it a greater sin: And

if

if he Repent but becauſe his pleaſure is gone, or becauſe he is brought to poverty or diſgrace by his ſin, this is but a Natural thing, and deſerves not the name of a Virtue. So to love God is in it ſelf Good, and the higheſt Duty: But if any man Love God as one that he thinks hath proſpered him in his ſinne, and helped and ſucceeded him in his Revenge, unjuſt Bloud-ſhed, Robbery, ſinfull Riſing and Thriving, thanking God and loving him for his Pleaſure in Luſt, Drunkenneſs, Gluttony, or the like, as moſt men that Idolize their Fleſh-pleaſure do: when they have Eaſe, and Honour, and all at Will, that they may offer a full Sacrifice to their Fleſh, and ſay, *Soul take thy eaſe:* Then they Thank God for it, and may Really Love him under this notion. This is to make God a Pandor or Servant to our Fleſh, and ſo to Love him for ſerving and humouring it. And this is ſo far from being a Virtue, that it is one of the greateſt of all ſins. And if another man Love God in a better notion a little, and Love his Luſts more, this is no *ſaving* Love (as I ſhall more fully ſhew you.) So that you ſee a man hath more to look after then the meer Honeſty, Virtue, or Moral Goodneſs of his Action: Or elſe all Actions that are virtuous would be ſaving.

κοσμικοὶ ἐσὶ ſancti dicuntur, & quodammodo ſunt, ſed ſine Radice & Soliditate, ut Rivet. *diſp. de Perſev. ſanct. §. 3. p. 203.*

The third thing to be enquired after, is the *Sincerity* of Grace conſidered as *Saving*. This is much more then the two former: And indeed is the great matter in Self-examination to be looked after: Here is the Work: Here is the difficulty: Here it is that we are now enquiring, how far Marks may be multiplied? how far they may be uſefull? and wherein this ſincerity doth conſiſt. The two former will not denominate a man a ſincere Chriſtian, nor prove him Juſtified, and in a ſtate of Salvation without this. Wherein this conſiſteth, I ſhall ſhew you in the following Propoſitions: Now I have firſt ſhewed you what it is that you muſt enquire after. (And I hope no wiſe Chriſtian will judge me too curious and exact here, ſeeing it is a work that neerly concerns us, and is not fit to be done in the dark: Our cauſe muſt be throughly ſifted at Judgment, and our game then muſt be plaied above-board, and therefore it is deſperate to juggle and cheat our ſelves now.) Only before I proceed, let me tell you, that according to this three-fold *Truth* or *Sincerity*, ſo there is a three-fold *Self-deluſion* or *Hypocriſie*. (Taking *Hypocriſie* for a ſeeming to be what we are not, either to our ſelves, or others: though perhaps we have

have no direct dissembling intent.) 1. To take on us to Repent, Believe, Love Christ, &c. when we do not at all, this is the grossest kinde of Hypocrisie, as wanting the very naturall Truth of the Act.

2. To seem to Believe, Repent, Love God, &c. virtuously (according to the former Description) and yet to do it but in subserviency to our Lusts and wicked Ends, this is another sort of gross Hypocrisie: Yea to do it in meer respect to fleshly prosperity (as, to Repent because sin hath brought us to sicknes and poverty; to Love God, meerly because he keeps up our fleshes prosperity, &c.) this still is gross Hypocrisie.

It may be a great Question which of these is the greater sinne; To Repent and Love God in subserviency to our sin; or not to do it at all?

Answ, It is not much worth the thinking on, they are both so desperately wicked: Therefore I will not trouble the Reader with a curious resolution of this Question: Only thus: Though to denie Gods Being, be a Blasphemous denial of his Natural Excellencie, and so of his Attributes which are the first platform of that which we call Morality in the Creature; yet to denie these his Attributes, and withall to ascribe sin and positive wickedness to the Blessed Holy God, seems to me the greater sinne: *Sicut esse Diabolum est pejus (quoad ipsum) quam non esse.*

3. The next kinde of Hypocrisie, and the most Common is, when men want the sincerity of Grace, as *saving only*, but have both the Truth of it as an *Act or Habit*, and as a *Virtue*. When men have *some* * Repentance, Faith, Hope, Love, &c. which is undissembled, and hath good Ends; but yet is not *saving*. This is the unsoundness which most among us in the Church perish by, that do perish; and which every Christian should look most to his heart in. This I think is discerned by few that are guiltie of it: Though they might all discern it, if they were Willing and Diligent.

* *Ita sincere, tam Resipiscentiam quam fidem, Conditionem ad salutem adipiscendam prorsus necessariam statuimus.* Frigland. *de Grat. p.* 997.

SECT. VII.

§. 7.

Propos. 6. *AS it is only the Precepts of Christ, that can assure us that one Action is virtuous, or a Duty more then another:*

ther: So it is only the tenour of the Covenant of Grace bestowing Justification or Salvation upon any Act, which makes that Act (or Grace) Justifying or Saving; and can assure us that it is so.

By the Precepts I mean any Divine Determination concerning our Dutie, what we Ought to Do or Avoid. It is the same sacred Instrument, which is called Gods Testament, his Covenant and his New Law, the several names being taken from several respects, (as I have opened elsewhere, and cannot now stand to prove.) This Law of God hath two parts: The Precept and the Sanction. The Precept may be considered, either as by it self [*Do this or that*] and so it maketh Duty: This constitutes the Virtue of Actions; (Regulating them) And so the second kind of sincerity, [*Whether an Action be good or bad*] must be tried by the Precepts, as Precepts. What God requireth is a Virtue: what he forbiddeth is a Vice: What he neither Requireth nor Forbiddeth, is Indifferent, as being not of Moral Consideration. (For the Popish Doctrine of Divine Counsels is vain.)

2. And then, these Precepts must be considered, not onely as they stand by themselves, and constitute Duty simply, saying, [*Do this:*] but also as they stand in conjunction with the Sanction, and say, [*Do this or that, and be saved, or else Perish*] as [*Believe and be saved, else not.*] And in this respect and sense they constitute the Conditions of the Covenant: and so they are the only Rule by which to know what is saving Grace, and what not. And only in this respect it is that they Justifie or Condemn men: They may Justifie or Condemn the Action, as bare Precepts and Prohibitions: But they Justifie not, nor Condemn the Person himself, but as Precepts conjoined with the Sanction: that is, with the Promise or Threatning.

So that it is hence evident that no humane conjecture can gather what is a *saving Grace* or *Duty*, and what not, either from a bare Precept considered disjunct from the Promise; or from any thing in the meer nature and use of the gracious Act it self. The nature of the Act is but its Aptitude to its Office: But the Consequents (for I will not call them Effects) Justification and Salvation, proceed from or upon them only as Conditions on which the free Promise bestoweth those benefits, directly. Those therefore which make the Formal reason of Faiths Justifying, to lie in its Apprehension, which they call its Instrumentality, being in-

deed the very Nature and Being of the Act, do little know what they say, nor how derogatory to Christ, and arrogating to themselves their doctrine is, as I have elsewhere manifested.

I conclude then, that It is only the Scripture that can tell you what is Justifying or Saving Grace, by promising and annexing Salvation thereto.

SECT. VIII.

§. 8.

Prop. 7.

Propos. 7. *Whatsoever therefore is the Condition which the Covenant of Grace requireth of man, for the attaining of Justification and Salvation, and upon which it doth bestow them; that only is a Justifying and Saving Act. And inferiour Duties are no further Marks to try by, nor are Justifying and Saving, then as they are reducible to that Condition.*

This is it which I have asserted in the last forgoing Chapter: and this is the reason why I laid down but only two Marks there. Though in the first Part, in the description of Gods people, I laid down the whole description, which must needs contain some things common, and not only special Properties; yet now I am to give you the true Points of Difference, I dare not number so many particulars. The Performance of the proper Condition of the New Covenant, promising Justification and Salvation, then, is the only Mark of Justification or Salvation, Direct and Infallible: or is the only Justifying and Saving Grace properly so called. Now you must understand that the Covenant of Life hath two parts, as the Condition for man to perform, if he will receive the benefits. The first is the naturall part concerning the pure Godhead, who is the First and the Last, the Principal Efficient and Ultimate End of all: Who is our Creator, Preserver, Governour, Happiness or Rest. This is [*The taking the Lord only for our God*] in opposition to all Idols visible or invisible. As the End as such is before and above all the means, and the Father or meer Godhead is above Christ the Mediator as such (as he saith, *Joh.* 14.28. *The Father is greater then I*) so this is the first and greater part of the condition of the Covenant: (And so Idolatry and Atheisme are the greatest and first condemning sins.) The second part of the Condition is, [*That we take Jesus Christ only for the Mediator and*

and our Redeemer, and so as our only Saviour and Supream Lord, by the Right of Redemption.] This is the second part: consisting in the choice of the right and only Way and Means to God, as he is the End: For Christ as Mediator is not the Ultimate End, but the Way to the Father. These two parts of the Condition are most evident in the Word, both in their Distinction and Necessity. The former was part of that Covenant made with *Adam*, which is not Repealed, nor ever will be, though the rest of that Covenant may be laid by. It was afterward still fully expressed to the Church before Christs coming in the flesh: In all the peoples covenanting this was still the summe, that [*They took the Lord only to be their God.*] But the later part was not in the Covenant with *Adam*: Nor was it openly and in full plainnesse put into the Covenant of Grace in the beginning: but still implied, and more darkly intimated, the light and clearnes of Revelation still increasing till Christs coming. Yet so, as that at the utmost they had but the discovery of a Saviour, to be born of a Virgin, of the Tribe of *Juda* at such a time: But never that *this Jesus* was the Christ. And so it was only in *a Saviour* so to be revealed that they were to believe before: But after Christs coming and his Miracles (and Resurrection at utmost) he tels them [*If ye believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins*] So that to them to whom he was Revealed (at least) it was of necessity to believe that [*This Jesus is he, and not to look for another*] Now to us Christians under the New Testament this later part of the Covenant (concerning the Mediator) is most fully expressed, and most frequently inculcated: Not as if the former part (concerning God the Creator and End) were become less necessary then before, or ever the less to be studied by Christians, or preached by the Ministers of the Gospel: But on the contrary, it is still implied, as being fully revealed before, and a thing generally received by the Church; yea and confirmed and stablished by the adding of the Gospel, and preaching Christ. For the End is still supposed and implied, when we determine of the Means: and the Means confirm and not deny the excellency and necessity of the End. Therefore when *Paul* (Act. 17. &c.) was to Preach to the *Athenians* or other Heathens, he first preacheth to them the Godhead, and seeks to bring them from their Idols; and then preacheth Christ. And therefore it is said, *Heb.* 11. *He that comes*

to God (as the End and his Happineſs, or Creator and Preſerver) *muſt* (firſt) *believe that God is, and that he is* (in the Redeemer) *a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* And therefore the Apoſtles * preached [*Repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*] The firſt is [*The turning from Idols to the true God*] (and ſo Repentance is in order of nature before Faith in the Mediator, and more excellent in its nature, as the End is then the way: but not before Faith in the Godhead.) The ſecond is the only high way to God. Therefore *Paul* was by preaching to Turn men from darkneſs to light (both from the darkneſs of Atheiſme and Idolatry, and the darkneſs of Infidelity: but firſt) *from the power of Satan* (and worſhipping devils) *to God:* (that ſo next) by faith in Chriſt they might receive Remiſſion of ſin, and Inheritance among them that are Sanctified, *Act.*26.18. And Chriſt himſelf took the ſame courſe, and preached theſe two parts of the condition of the Covenant diſtinctly; *Joh.*17.3. *This is life eternal to know thee the only true God, and* (then) *Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* (Words of knowledge in Scripture-commands import Affection.) And *Joh.*14.28. *The Father is greater then I.* And *Joh.*14.6. *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: No man cometh to the Father but by me.* And *Joh.*14.1. *Ye believe in God,* (there is the firſt part) *Believe alſo in Me* (there is the ſecond part.) But intended brevity forbids me to heap up more proof in ſo plain a Caſe.

* Act.20.21.

To this laſt part of the Condition is oppoſed Infidelity, or not-believing in Chriſt; being the chiefeſt condemning ſin, next to Atheiſm and Idolatry, which are oppoſite to the firſt part. On theſe two parts of the condition of the Covenant, hath God laid all our ſalvation, as much as concerns our part; ſtill ſuppoſing that God and the Mediator have done and will do all their part.

The firſt part of the Condition I call, *The natural part*; being from the beginning, and written in the nature of every reaſonable creature: and by an Eminencie and Excellencie it is of Natural Morality above all other Laws whatſoever. The ſecond I call, *The ſupernatural part* of the Condition; as being not known to any man by the meer light of Nature; but is ſupernaturally revealed to the world by the Goſpel. The firſt part alſo, is the baſis or great command of the Decalogue; [*Thou ſhalt have none other God but me*] or in other terms [*Thou ſhalt love God above all.*]

all.] The second is the great command of the Gospel [*Believe in the Lord Jesus*] or in other terms [*Love Christ above All*] (For, as I said, words of knowledge in Scripture imply Affection, especially Will: where all Acts of the soul are compleat, which in the intellect are but incompleat, imperfect and preparatory: the Understanding being but the entrance to the Will; and the Will being an extended understanding: Therefore sometime Christ saith, *He that believeth not is condemned:* Sometime, *He that loveth,* any thing, *more then me, is not worthy of me, and cannot be my Disciple.*) And he joyneth them together in *Joh.*16.27. Therefore hath the Father loved you, because you have *loved me,* and have *believed,* &c.] Intellectual belief or assent therefore, where ever you reade it commanded, implieth the Wills consent and love.

And thus I have shewed you what the conditions of the Covenant are: which I have done the fullier, that you might know what is *a Saving Grace* or Act, and what not. For you may easily conceive, that it must needs be safer trying by these then by any lower Act or Duty: and as all other are no further saving, then as they belong to these, or are reducible to them; so you can no further try your selves by them, but as they are reduced to these. And now you see the reason why I mentioned but only two Marks in the foregoing Chapter: and why I say that true Marks are so few, by which a man may safely try his title to heaven. And yet you shall see that we must yet reduce them to a narrower room, when we come to open the nature of sincerity. In preparation to which I must tell you; that In the terms of these two Marks, or two parts of the condition of the Covenant, there is contained somewhat common (which an unregenerate man may perform;) and somewhat speciall, and proper to the Saints. Though all must go together and be found in those that will be saved, yet the specifical Form, or Constitutive difference, by which as *Saving*, the Act of a true Believer is discerned from the Act of an unsound person, doth lie but in part of it, and I think but in one point. As a man is defined to be [a Reasonable living-creature:] but to be a creature will not prove him a man, nor to be a living creature neither: because that there are other creatures, and living creatures, or animate besides himself. But to be a *Reasonable* Animal or living creature, will prove him a man; because

Reason contains his specifique form and constitutive difference. Other inferiour creatures may have bodies and fleshly bodies, as well as man, and others may have life (which we call a Soul) (and yet man must have these too) But others with these have not Reason; or a Soul indued with a power of Reasoning. So in these Marks of Grace or conditions of the Covenant: To love is common to every man: To love God and Christ is common to a Christian, with an hypocrite or wicked man: But to love Christ *Savingly*, (that is, as I shall shew you presently, *Sovereignly* or *Chiefly*) this is the Form or Constitutive difference of Love which is *Saving*. To *Take* or *Accept*, is common to every man: To *Take* or *Accept* of *God* and *Christ*, is common to a true Christian and a false: But To *Take* or *Accept* of God and his Christ *Sincerely* and *Savingly*, is proper to a sound Believer. So that even in these two Marks, the *sincerity* of both lieth in one Point. For supposing the Truth of the Act, and the Truth of the Vertue in generall (which are both common, as I have told you:) the Truth or Sincerity of them, as Saving, is the only thing to be enquired after. And in this sense, *I know but One infallible Mark of sincerity:* seeing sincerity lieth in this one point. But before I come to open it more fully, I will premise (and but briefly name) two more Propositions.

§. 9. SECT. IX.

Prop. 8. Propos. 8. *GOd hath not in the Covenant promised Justification or Salvation upon any meer Act or Acts considered without that Degree and Sutableness to their objects wherein the sincerity of them as Saving doth consist.*

It is said indeed, that *He that believeth shall be saved*, but then it is supposed, that it be sincere Believing: for any Believing is not here meant: For many that Believed, and that without gross dissimulation, shall perish, as not Believing sincerely. And therefore Christ would not trust himself with those that yet Believed in him, because he knew their hearts, that they did it not in faithfulness and sincerity, *Joh.* 2. 23, 24. But I shall confirm this more fully afterwards.

SECT.

SECT. X.

§. 10.

Propos. 9. *THere is no one Act considered in its meer nature and kinde without its measure and sutableness to its object, which a true Christian may perform, but an unsound Christian may perform it also.*

Prop. 9.

I have great reason to add this, that you may take heed of trying and judging of your selves by any meer Act, considered in it self. If any doubt of this we might soon prove it, by producing the most excellent Acts, and shewing it of them in particular. Believing is as proper to the saved as any thing, for the Act. And yet as for the assenting Act, *James* tels us the devils Believe: And as for Resting on Christ by Affiance, and expecting Pardon and Salvation from him, we see beyond question, that many thousand wicked men, have no other way to quiet them in sinning; but that they are confident Christ will pardon and save them, and they undissemblingly Quiet or Rest their souls in this perswasion, and undissemblingly expect salvation from him when they have sinned as long as they can. And indeed, herein lieth the nature of Presumption: And so real are they in this Faith, that all our Preaching cannot beat them from it. If the Question be, Whether a wicked man can Pray, or Meditate, or forbear the Act of this or that sin, I think none will deny it. But yet all this will be opened fullier anon.

SECT. XI.

§. 11.

Propos. 10. *THe Supremacy of God and the Mediator in the Soul, or the precedency and prevalency of his Interest in us, above the Interest of the flesh, or of inferiour good, is the very point wherein materially the sincerity of our Graces, as* Saving, *doth consist; and so is the* one *Mark by which those must judge of their states, that would not be deceived.*

Prop. 10.

Propos. 11. *FOr here the Sincerity of the Act as Saving consisteth in being suted to its adequate object, (considered in its respects which are essential to it as such an object.) And so to Believe*

Prop. 11.

lieve in, Accept and Love God as God, and Christ as Christ, *is the sincerity of these Acts. But this lieth in Believing, Accepting and Loving God as the only Supream Authority or Ruler and Good, and Christ as the only Redeemer, and so our Sovereign Lord, our Saviour, our Husband and our Head.*

I joyn both these Propositions together, because the explication of both will be best joyned together. And first I will tell you what I mean by some of the terms in these Propositions.

1. When I speak of the Interest of God and the Mediator in the Soul, I do not mean a meer *Right to us*, (which we call *Jus ad rem:*) for so God and the Mediatour God-Man, have Interest in all men: as being undoubtedly Rightful *Lord of all*; whether they obey him or not: But I mean Christs Actual Interest *in us* and Possession of us (which we call *Jus in re*) and that as it consisteth in a Voluntary Entertainment of him into all the Powers of the Soul, according to their severall Capacities and Offices. As we use to say of men in respect of ther friends, [Such a man hath so much Interest in his friend, that he can prevail with him before any other.] So when Gods Interest in us is greater then the Interest of the flesh, that he hath the Precedency and Supremacy in our Understandings, Wils and Affections, this is the sincerity of all our Graces as Saving; and so the discovery of our Souls sincerity. I shall yet fullier open this anon.

2. I here include the Interest of Father, Son and holy Ghost, both as they are conjunct, and as they are distinct. As considered in the Essence and Unity of the Godhead, so their Interest is conjunct: both Father, Son and holy Ghost being our Creator, Ruler and Ultimate End and chief Good. But in the distinction of Persons, as it was the Son in a proper sense that Redeemed us, and thereby purchased a peculiar Interest in us, and Dominion over us, as he is Redeemer, so doth he carry on this Interest in a peculiar way: And so the Interest of the holy Ghost as our Sanctifier is specially advanced by our yeilding to his Motions, *&c.*

3. By the Supremacy of God, and the Prevalencie of Christs Interest, I do not mean [a] That it *alway prevaileth for Actuall obedience* against the suggestions and allurements of the flesh. A man may possibly pleasure a lesser friend or a stranger, before a greater friend, for once or more, and then it proves not that the stranger hath the greater Interest in him. But I mean, that God hath Really

[a] *Renati quantumvis alacriter militent adversus peccata, tamen & multa & magna carnis imbecillitate laborant; cui, spiritu divinitus excitato, obluctantur; crebrò tamen à cupiditatibus carnis se vinci patiuntur,* &c. Suffrag. Theolog. Bremensium *in Synodo Dord. in Art.* 5. *Thes.* 9. Vid. *Thes.* 10, 11, 12, 13.

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Really more of his Esteem, and Will, and *Rational* (though not *Passionate*) Love and Desire; and Authority and Rule in his Heart and Life.

4. When I speak of the Interest of the flesh, I chiefly intend and include that inferiour good which is the fleshes delight. For here are considerable distinctly, 1. The part which would be pleased in opposition to Christ; and that, with the Scripture, I call The Flesh. 2. The thing which this flesh desires as its happiness; and that is, Its own pleasure, delight and full content. 3. The objects from whence it expecteth this delight and content; and that is, All inferiour good which it apprehendeth to conduce most to that End, as being most sutable to its self. By the flesh then, I mean, The soul, as sensitive, as it is now since the fall become unruly, by the strengthening of its raging desires, and the weakning of Reason that should rule it; and consequently the Rationall part, thereby seduced: or if the Rationall (mis-informed and ill-disposed) be the leader in any sin, before or without the sensitive: so that I mean, that which inordinately inclineth us to any inferiour good. This inferiour good consisteth in the Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of Life, as *John* distinguisheth them: Or as commonly they are distributed, in Pleasure, Profits and Honour; all which are concentred and terminated in the sin we call *Flesh-pleasing* in the general: for that pleasure is it which is sought in all; or it is the pursuit of an inferiour fleshly happiness, preferred before the Superiour Spiritual Everlasting Happiness. Though most commonly this pleasure be sought in Honour, Riches, Eating, Drinking, Pleasant dwellings, Company, Sports and Recreations, Clothes, Wantonness or Lustfull Uncleanness, the satisfying of Passions and Malicious desires, or the like: yet some time it riseth higher, and the sinner seeketh his happiness and content in largeness of Knowledge, much Learning and curious Speculations about the nature of the creatures, yea and about God himself. But perhaps it will be found that these are neer of the same nature with the former sensitive Delights. For it is not the Excellency or Goodness of God himself that delighteth them, but the novelty of the thing, and the agitation of their own Imagination, Phantasie and Intellect thereupon, which is naturally desirous to be actuated, and employed, as receiving thereby some seeming addition to its own perfection: and that not as

from God, who is the object of their Knowledge; but as from the meer enlargement of Knowledge in it self; or, which is far worse, they make the study of God and Divine things which they delight in, but subservient to some base inferiour object: And so though they delight in studying and knowing God and Heaven, and Scripture, yet not in God as God, or the chief Good, nor in Heaven as Heaven; nor out of any true saving love to God: but either because, as some Preachers, they make a gainfull trade of it, by teaching others: or because it is an honour to know these things, and be able to discourse of them, and a dishonour to be ignorant: Or at best, as I said before, they desire to know God and Divine Truths, out of a delight in the Novelty, and Actuating, and natural Elevation of the Understanding hereby: It is one thing to delight in Knowing, and another to delight in the thing Known. An ungodly man may delight in studying and knowing severall Axioms or Truths concerning God; but he never chiefly delighteth in God himself. As a studious man desires to know what Hell is, and where, and many truths concerning it: but he desireth not Hell it self, nor delighteth in it. A godly man desireth to know the nature and danger of sin, and Satans way and wiles in temptations: but he doth not therefore desire sin and temptation it self. So a wicked man may desire to know the nature of Grace, and Christ, and Glory, and yet not desire Grace, and Christ, and Glory. It is one thing to terminate a mans desire and delight in bare knowledge, or the esteem, or self-advancement that accrues thereby; and another thing to terminate it in the Thing which we desire to know; making knowledge but a means to its fruition. So that though the virtuousnes or vitiousnes of our Willing, and severall Affections, do receive its denomination and specification very much from the object (as in loving God, and loving sinfull pleasure, *&c.*) because there is the proper and ultimate *terminus* of the souls motion: yet the Acts of the Understanding may be exercised about the best of objects, without any virtuousnes at all: It being but the Truth and not the Goodnes that is its object; and that Truth may be in the best object and in the worst. And so it is the same kinde of delight that such a man hath in knowing God and knowing other things: for it is the same kinde of Truth that he seeks in both. And indeed Truth is not the ultimate object terminating

minating the ſouls motion (not as it is Truth,) but an intermediate prerequiſite to *Good*, which is the ultimatly terminating object: And accordingly the Acts of the meer underſtanding, are but preparatory to the Acts of the Will, and ſo are but imperfect initial Acts of the Soul, as having a further End then their own proper Object: And therefore it is that all Philoſophers place no Moral Habits in the Underſtanding, but all in the Will; for till they come to the Will, (though they may be in a large ſenſe Morally good or evil, vertuous or vicious, yet) they are but ſo in an imperfect kinde and ſenſe; and therefore they call ſuch Habits only Intellectual.

The ſumme of all this is, That it is but the Fleſhes Pleaſure and Intereſt which an ungodly man chiefly purſueth, even in his delightfull ſtudying of Holy things: For he ſtudieth Holy things and Prophane alike. Or if any think it too narrow a Phraſe, to call this Fleſh-pleaſing, or preferring the intereſt of the fleſh, it being the Soul as Rational, and not only as Senſitive, which turneth from God to inferiour things; I do not gain-ſay this: I know *Gibieuf* determines it, that man apoſtatized from God to himſelf, and that in Regeneration he is turned again from himſelf to God. Yet this muſt be very cautelouſly underſtood; for God forbiddeth not man to ſeek himſelf duly, but commandeth it: Man may and muſt ſeek his own Happineſs. The chief Good is deſired as Good to us. But to ſtate this caſe rightly, and determine the mountainous difficulties that here riſe in the way, is no fit work for this place: I will not therefore ſo much as name them. The eaſieſt and ſafeſt way therefore to clear the preſent difficulty to us, is, to look chiefly at the different Objects and Ends: God who is the Supream Good, preſenteth and offereth himſelf to us, to be enjoyed. Inferiour Good ſtands up in competition with him; and would inſinuate it ſelf into our hearts, as if it were more amiable and deſirable then God. Now if Gods intereſt prevail, it is a certain ſign of Grace; If inferiour good prevail and have more actual intereſt or poſſeſſion then God, it is a certain ſign of an unhappy condition; or that the perſon is not yet in a ſtate of Salvation.

And as you thus ſee what I mean by the intereſt of the fleſh or inferiour good in us; ſo in all this I include the intereſt of the world and the devil: For the world is, at leaſt, the greateſt part

of this inferiour good, which stands in competition with God. And Satan is but the envious agent to present this bait before us: to put a false gloss on it in his presentation; to weaken all Gods arguments that should restrain us; to disgrace God himself to our souls; and so to press and urge us to a sinfull choice and prosecution. He shews us the forbidden fruit as pleasant, and as a means to our greater advancement and happiness; and draweth us to unbelief for the hiding of the danger. He takes us up in our imagination, and shews us the Kingdoms of the world and their Glory, to steal our hearts from the Glorious Kingdom of God. So that the interest of the Flesh, the interest of the World, and the interest of Satan in us, is all one in effect. For they are but several causes to carry the soul from God, to a false, deluding, miserable End.

Again, In the Proposition I say [*It is the Prevalency of the Interest of God or Christ, above inferiour Good*] putting inferiour Good, as the competitor with God who is the greatest Good: because the Will cannot incline to any thing under the notion of evil, or of indifferent, but only as Good. No man can Will evil as evil: He must first cease to be Rational, and to be man. If evil appeared only as evil there were no danger in it. The force of the temptation lies in making evil seem Good, either to the senses, or imagination, or reason, or all. Here lies the danger of a pleasing condition, in regard of Credit, Delights, Riches, Friends, Habitation, Health or any inferiour thing: The more Good appeareth or seemeth to be in them (as disjunct from God) the more dangerous: for they are the liker to stand up in competition with him; and to carry it with our partial blinded souls in the competition. Remember this, if you love your selves, when you would have all things about you more pleasing and lovely. Here lies the unknown danger of a prosperous state: and on the contrary lies the pretious benefit of adversity; which if men were not brutish and unbelieving, they would heartily welcome as the safest condition.

☞ Mat. 9. *How hard for a Rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?*

Again observe here, that I mention inferiour [Good] and not [Truth] as that which stands in competition with God. For of two Truths both are equally true (though not equally evident:) And therefore though Satan would perswade the soul that inferiour Good is better for us then God; yet he sets not Truth against Truth in competition. He would indeed make us believe that

that Gods Word is not True at all, or the Truth not certain. But with the Understanding there is no competition between Truth and Truth, if known so to be. For the Understanding can know and believe several Truths at once, though about never so different matters; as that there is a Heaven and a Hell, that there is a God, a Christ, a World, a Devil, *&c.* But the Will cannot embrace and choose all different Good at once: for God hath made the enjoyment of them incompatible: Much less can it Will two things as the chiefest Good, when there is but one such: or God and the creature as equally Good, and both in the highest degree.

Here then you further see the meaning of the Proposition, when I speak of the Prevalency of Christs Interest, I mean it directly and principally in the [Will] of man, and not in the Understanding. For though I doubt not but there is true Grace in the Understanding as well as in the Will, yet (as I shall further shew anon) as it is in the Intellect, it is not certainly and fully discernable, but only the force of the Intellective Acts appear in the Motions and Resolutions of the Will. And therefore men must not try their states directly by any Graces or Marks in the Understanding. And also if it were possible to discern their sincerity immediately in the Understanding, yet it must not be there by this way of competition of different Objects in regard of the Degree of Verity, as if one were more True and the other less: as it is with the Will about the degrees of Goodness in the Objects which stand in competition. Though yet a kinde of competition there is with the Intellect too: As 1° between God and the Creature, who is to be Believed rather: and 2° between two contradictory or opposite Propositions, which is True, and which false. As between these [God is the chief Good] and [God is not the chief Good;] or these [God is the chief Good] and [Pleasure is the chief Good.] But though the Truth be here Believed, yet that is no certain Evidence of Sincerity; except it be so Believed, as may be prevalent with the Will: which is not discernable in the bare Act of Believing, but in the Act of Willing So that it is the Prevalency of Christs Interest in the Will, that we here speak of: and consequently in the Affections, and Conversation. And indeed (as is before hinted) all humane Acts as they are in the meer Understanding, are but rude and imperfect: for it is but the first digestion, as it were, that is there performed,

(as of meat in the stomack :) But in the Will they are more perfectly concocted (as the chyle is sanguified in the Liver, Spleen and Veins.) And in the Affections they are yet further raised and concocted (as the vitall spirits are begotten in the heart: though many here take meer flatulency for spirits: and so they do common passion for spirituall Affections;) and then in the Conversation, (as the food, in the habit of the body,) the concoction is finished: so that the sincerity of Grace cannot (I think) be discerned by any meer Intellectuall Act: As you may finde Judicious Dr *Staughton* asserting in his *Righteous mans Plea to Happiness.* But yet do not misunderstand it, as if saving Grace did not reside in the Understanding.

Now as the Apostle saith, *Gal* 5.17. *The flesh warreth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary one to the other*; A Christians life is a continual combate between these two contrary Interests. God will be taken for our Portion and Happiness, and so be our Ultimate End, or else we shall never enjoy him to make us Happy: The Flesh suggesteth to us the sweetness and delight of Carnal Contentments, and would have us glut our selves with these. God will Rule, and that in supremacy, or he will never save us. The Flesh would fain be pleased, and have its desire, whether God be obeyed and pleased or not. There is no hope of Reconciling these contrary Interests. God hath already made his Laws, containing the Conditions of our Salvation or Damnation: These Laws do limit the Desires of the Flesh, and contradict its Delights: The Flesh cannot Love that which is against it: It hates them, because they speak not good of it, but evil; because it so mightily crosseth its contents. It was meet it should be so: for if God had suffered no Competitor to set up their Interest against his, how would the faithfullness of his subjects be tried? how would his Providences and Graces be manifested? Even to *Adam* that yet had no sin, this way of Triall was judged necessary: and when he would please his Eye and his Taste, and desire to be higher, it was just with God to Displease him and to bring him lower. God will not change these his holy and righteous Laws to please the Flesh, nor conform himself to its will. The Flesh will not conform it self to God; and so here is the Christian Combate. Christ who hath Purchased us, expecteth the first or chief room in our Affections, or else he will effectively

ly be no Saviour for us. The Fleſh doth importunately ſolicit the Affections, to give the chief room and entertainment to its Contents. Chriſt who hath ſo dearly bought the Dominion over us all, will either Rule us as our Soveraign, or Condemn us for our Rebellion (*Luk.*19.17.) The Fleſh would be free, and is ſtill ſoliciting us to Treaſon. For as eaſie as Chriſts yoak is, and as light as his burden, yet is it no more ſuited with the Fleſhes Intereſt, then the heavier and more grievous Law was: The Law of Liberty, is not a Law of Carnall Liberty. Now in this Combat, the Word and Miniſtry are ſolicitors for Chriſt; ſo is Reaſon it ſelf ſo far as it is Rectified, and well guided: but becauſe Reaſon is naturally weakned and blinde; yea and the Word alone is not ſufficient to Illuminate and Rectifie it; therefore Chriſt ſends his Spirit into the ſouls of his people, to make that Word effectuall to open their eyes: here is the great help that the ſoul hath for the maintaining or carrying on the Intereſt of Chriſt. But yet once Illuminating is not enough. For the Will doth not neceſſarily chooſe that which the Underſtanding concludeth to be beſt (even *hic & nunc, & conſideratis conſiderandis:*) A drunkards underſtanding may tell him, that it is far better (all things laid together) to forbear a cup of wine, then to drink it: and that the Good of Virtue and Duty is to be preferred before the Good of Pleaſure, (This experience aſſures us of, though all the Philoſophers in the world ſhould contradict it: and I am not diſputing now; and therefore I will not ſtand to meddle with mens contrary opinions,) and yet the violence of his ſenſuall Appetite, may cauſe him to lay hands on the cup and pour it in. And indeed ſo far it is a brutiſh Act: and it is no ſuch wonder to have ſinfull Acts termed and proved brutiſh, if we knew that all true Reaſon is againſt them. Reaſon is on Gods ſide, and that which is againſt him is not Reaſon. (We may by Diſcourſe proceed to ſin, but the Arguments are all Fallacious that draw us.) There is no Neceſſity to the committing of a Sin, that Reaſon or the Underſtanding ſhould firſt conclude it Beſt: ſo great is the power of Senſe upon the Phantaſie and Imagination, and of theſe on the Paſſions, and the Chooſing Power, (eſpecially as to the exciting of the Locomotive) that if Reaſon be but ſilent and ſuſpended, ſin will be committed (as a man hath luſtfull, and revengefull, and covetous deſires in his Dream, and that very violent.)

lent.) Reason is oft asleep when the senses are awake; and then they may easily play their game: Even as the godliest man cannot restrain a sinfull thought or desire in his Dream, as he can waking; so neither when he is waking, if Reason be asleep: Although Reason never take part with sin, yet if it stand neuter, the sin will be committed. Yea that is not all: but if Reason do conclude for Duty and against sin, and stand to that conclusion, yet I think, the sensitive sinfull appetite and imagination may prevail with the Will (unless you will say that this Appetite is the Will it self, man having but one Will, and so may it self command the Locomotive) against, as well as without the conclusion of Reason (as in the example before mentioned.)

To understand this you must know, that to the Motion of the Will effectually, (especially where there are violent contrary motions and inducements) it is not only necessary that the understanding say, This is a Duty, or This is a Sin, or, It is better to let it alone: But this must be concluded of as a matter of great importance and concernment; and the understanding must expres the Weight, as well as the Truth of what it utters concerning Good or Evil: And this must especially be by a strong and forcible Act; or else though it conclude rightly, yet it will not prevail. Many men may have their Understandings informed of the same Duty, and all at the very exercise conclude it Good and necessary: and so concerning the evil of sin: And yet though they all pass the same conclusion, they shall not all alike prevail with the Will; but one more, and another less: because one passeth this conclusion seriously, vigorously, importunately; and the other slightly, and sleepily, and remisly. If you be busie, writing or reading; and one friend comes to you to call you away to some great business, and useth very weighty Arguments, yet if he speak them coldly and sleepily, you may perhaps not be moved by him: but if another come and call you but upon a lesser business, and speak loud and earnestly and will take no deniall, though his Reasons be weaker, he may sooner prevail. Do we not feel that the words of a Preacher do take more with our Wills and Affections, from the moving patheticall manner of expression, then from the strength of Argument (except with very wise men:) at least, how much that furthers it; when the best Arguments in the mouth of a sleepy Preacher, or unseasonably and illfavouredly delivered, will

will not take. And why ſhould we think that there is ſo great a difference between other mens Reaſonings prevailing with our Wils, and our own Reaſons way of prevailing? (But I muſt check my digreſſing Pen, which creeps away to Controverſies before I am well aware.)

Now all this being ſo, that there muſt be a ſtrong, lively, loud, preſſing, importunate Reaſoning, and not only a True Reaſoning and concluding; hence it is that there is neceſſary to the ſoul, not only ſo much Illumination as may diſcover the Truth; but ſo much as may diſcover it *cleerly* and *fully*; and may ſhew us the *Weight* of the matter, as well as the *Truth*: and eſpecially as may be ſtill an *exciter* of the Underſtanding to do its duty, and may *quicken* it up to do it *vigorouſly*: And therefore to this end Chriſt giveth his Spirit to his people, to ſtrive againſt the fleſh. The ſoul is ſeated in all the body, but we certainly and ſenſibly perceive that it doth not exerciſe or Act alike in all: but it underſtandeth in and by the Brain or Animal ſpirits: and it Willeth, and Deſireth, and Loveth, and Feareth, and Rejoiceth in and by the Heart: And doubtleſs the vital ſpirits, or thoſe in the Heart, are the Souls Inſtrument in this work. Now to procure a Motion of the ſpirits in the Heart, by the foremotion of the ſpirits in the brain, requires ſome ſtrength in the firſt motion; and the more forcible it is, likely the more forcible will the motion in the heart be. This order and Inſtrumentality in Acting, is no diſparagement to the ſoul; but is a ſweet diſcovery of Gods admirable and orderly works. (But yet I muſt recall my ſelf.) Now therefore beſides a bare Act of underſtanding, there is neceſſary to this effectuall prevailing with the Will, that there be added that which we call *Conſideration*, which is a dwelling upon the ſubject, and is a ſerious, fixed, conſtant Acting of the underſtanding, which therefore is likely to attain the effect: The uſe of this, and its Power on the Will and Affections, and the Reaſons, I have ſhewed you afterward in the 4th Part of this Book. Hence it is, that let their wit be never ſo great, yet Inconſiderate men are ever Wicked men: and men of ſober frequent Conſideration, are uſually the moſt Godly, and prevail moſt againſt any Temptation: there being no more effectuall means againſt any temptation indeed, whether it be to Omiſſion or Commiſſion, then this ſetting Reaſon forcibly awork by Conſideration. The moſt Conſiderate men

are the most Resolved and Confirmed. So that besides a bare cold conclusion of the understanding (though you call it Practicall) this Consideration must give that Force, and Fixedness, and Importunity to your Conclusions, which may make them stronger then all the sensitive solicitations to the contrary, or else the Soul will still follow the Flesh. Now Christ will have his Spirit to excite this Consideration, and to enable us to perform it more powerfully and successfully, then else we should ever do. And thus the spirit is Christs solicitor in and to our souls; and by them it advanceth Christs Interest, and maintaineth it in the Saints, and causeth it to prevail against the Interest of the Flesh. Where he prevaileth not in the main, as well as striveth, there is yet no saving Grace in that soul. Whatever pleadings, or strivings, or reasonings, or concludings there may be in and by the soul on Christs side, yet if the Fleshes Interest be still greater and stronger in the soul then Christs, that soul is in a state of wrath: He may be in a hopefull way to come to a safer condition, and not far from the Kingdom of God, and almost perswaded to be a Christian: but if he die in that state, no doubt, he shall be damned. He may be a Christian by common profession; but in a saving sense, no man is a Christian, in whose soul any thing hath a greater and higher Interest then God the Father and the Mediator.

§. 12.

SECT. XII.

Prop. 12.

Propos. 12. *THerefore the sincerity of saving Grace, as saving, lieth materially, not in the bare Nature of it; but in the Degree: Not in the Degree considered Absolutely in it self; but comparatively as it is prevalent against its Contrary.*

I cannot expect that the Reader should suddenly Receive this Truth (though of so great consequence that many mens salvations are concerned in it, as I shall shew anon) till I have first made it plain. Long have I been poaring on this Doubt, Whether the sincerity of Grace, and so the Difference between an Hypocrite, and a true Christian do consist in the Nature, or only in the Degree: Whether it be a Gradual or Specifical difference? And I never durst conclude that it lay but in the Degree; 1. Because of the seeming force of the Objections, which I shall anon answer.

swer. And, 2. Because of the constant contrary Judgement of all those Divines, whom I highliest valued. (For though I am asha-med of my own Ignorance, yet I do not repent that I received some things upon trust from the Learned, while I was learning and studying them; or that I took them by a Humane Faith, when I could not reach to take them by a Divine Faith. Only I then must hold them but as Opinions, but not Absolutely as Articles of my Creed.) But I am now convinced of my former mistake; and shall therefore endeavour to rectifie others, being in a matter of such moment.

You must remember therefore that I have shewed you already. that God hath not made any Act considered in its meer Nature, without considering it as in this prevailing degree, to be the condition of Salvation; and that a wicked man may perform an Act for the Nature of it, which a true Christian may do. But let us yet consider the Proposition more distinctly.

Divines use to give the title of saving Grace to four things;

The first is, *Gods Purpose of saving us, and the special Love and Favour which he beareth to us, and so his Will to do us special Good.* This is indeed most principally, properly, and by an excellency, called, *saving Grace.* It is the fountain from which all other Grace doth proceed: and, by this Grace we are Elected, Redeemed, Justified and Saved. Now the Question in hand is not concerning this Grace which is Immanent in God; where no doubt there is no specifical difference; when Divines accord that there is no diversity or multiplicity at all, but perfect Unity (allowing still the unsearchable Mystery of the Trinity:) Therefore I rest confident that no solid Divine will say, that Gods common Love or Grace to the unsanctified, doth by a natural Specification differ from his special Love and Grace to his chosen; (as they are in God.)

The second thing which is commonly called *Saving Grace,* is the Act of God by which the Spirit infuseth or worketh the special habitual saving Gifts in the soul: Not the Effect (for that I shall next mention;) but the Act of the holy Ghost which worketh this Effect. This is called *Gratia Operans,* working Grace, as the Effect in us, is called, *Gratia Operata,* Grace wrought in us. Now

1. This is none of it that we enquire after in the Question in

hand, when we ask, *Whether the Truth of Grace lie onely in the Comparative or Prevailing Degree?*

2. If it were, yet there is here no place for such a doubt. 1. Because no man can prove such natural specifique difference in the Acts of God; nor will I think affirm them. 2. Especially because in the Judgement of great Divines, there is no such Act of God at all distinct from his Essence and Immanent Eternal Acts: So that this is the same with the former. God doth not need, as man, to put forth any Act but his meer Willing it, for the producing of any Effect. If man will have a stone moved, his Will cannot stir it, but it must be the strength of his arm. But God doth but Will it, and it is done: (As Dr *Twiss* once or twice saith: But *Bradwardine* and others fully confirm) Now Gods will is his Essence: and he never did begin or cease to Will any thing, though he Will the Beginning or Ceasing of things. He Willed the Creation of the World, and the Dissolution of it at once from Eternity: though he willed from Eternity that it should be Created and Dissolved in time: And so the Effect only doth begin and end, but not the Cause. This is our ordinary Metaphysical Divinity: If any vulgar Reader think it beyond his capacity, I am content that he move in a lower Orb. But doubtless we must not feign a natural specifique difference of Acts in God.

The third thing which we commonly call *Saving Grace*, is, The special Effects of this Work of the Spirit on the Soul, commonly called *Habitual Grace*, or the *Spirit in us*, or the *Seed of God abiding in us*; or our *Real Holinesse*, or our *New Nature*.

Now, 1. Our Question is not directly and immediately of this, *Whether Common and Special Grace do differ more then by the forementioned Degree?* For this is not it which a Christian searcheth after immediately or directly in his Self-examination. For Habits (as *Suarez* and others conclude) are not to be felt in themselves, but only by their Acts. We cannot know that we are disposed to Love God, but by feeling the stirrings of Love to him. So that it is the Act that we must directly look for, and thence discern the Habit.

2. But if any man will needs put the Question, of this Habitual Grace only, though it be not it that I speak of principally, yet I answer him, That no man doubteth but that common Grace contain-

containeth good Diſpoſitions; as ſpecial Grace containeth Habits. Now who knoweth not that a Diſpoſition and a Habit do differ but in Degree? A carnal man hath a weak Inclination to Good, and a ſtrong Inclination to Evil: Or, if you will ſpeak properly (for the Will cannot chooſe Evil as Evil, but as a ſeeming Good) he hath a weak Inclination to Spiritual and Heavenly Superiour Good; and a ſtrong Inclination to Fleſhly, Earthly, Inferiour Good: Whereupon the Stronger bears down the Weaker. But the Regenerate have ſtronger Inclinations to Superiour Spiritual Good, then to Inferiour Fleſhly Good, and ſo the ſtronger in moſt Temptations prevaileth. Now what natural difference is here, but only in Degree?

The fourth thing which we call *Saving Grace*, is, *The exerciſe or Acts which from theſe Habits or Effectual Inclinations do proceed.* And this is the Grace which the *Soul* muſt enquire after directly in his Self-examination. And therefore this is it of which we raiſe the Queſtion, *Wherein the Truth or Sincerity of it doth conſiſt?* (There is indeed other things without us which may yet be called Saving Grace, as Redemption and Donation (commonly called the Imputation) of Chriſts Righteouſneſs, and ſo Remiſſion, Juſtification, *&c.* but becauſe every one may ſee that our Queſtion is not of theſe, I will not ſtand to make more mention of them.) Now for theſe Acts of Grace, who can produce any Natural Specifique difference between them when they are ſpecial and ſaving, and when they are common and not ſaving? Is not common Knowledge and ſpecial Knowledge, common Belief and ſpecial Belief, all *Knowledge* and *Belief?* And is not Belief the ſame thing in one and in another? ſuppoſing both to be Real, though but one ſaving? Our Underſtandings and Wils are all Phyſically of the like ſubſtance, and an Act and an Act, are Accidents of the ſame kind; and we ſuppoſe the Object to be the ſame? Common Love to God, and Special ſaving Love to God be both Acts of the Will.

But here before I proceed further I muſt tell you, That you muſt ſtill diſtinguiſh between a Phyſical or Natural Specification, and a Moral: And remember, That our Queſtion is onely of a Phyſical difference, which I deny; and not of a Moral, which I make no doubt of. And you muſt know that a meer difference in Degrees in the Natural reſpect, doth ordinarily conſtitute a

specifical Difference in Morality: And the Moral Good or Evil of all our Actions lieth much in the Degree, to wit, that they be kept in the mean between the two extream Degrees. And so a little anger, and a great deal, and little Love to creatures, and a great deal, though they differ but Gradually in their Natures, yet they differ Specifically in Morality; so that one may be an excellent virtue, and the other an odious vice.; So between speaking too much, and too little: Eating or drinking too much or too little: The middle between these is a Virtue: and both extreams are Vices: and yet Naturally they differ but in Degree. Virtue as Virtue, consisteth not in the bare Nature of an Act: but Formally it consisteth in the agreement or conformity of our Actions or Dispositions to the Rule or Law (which determineth of their *Dueneſſe*) which Law or Rule prescribeth the Mean (or middle degree) and forbiddeth and condemneth both the extreams (in degree) where such extreams are Possible, and we capable of them. So that there is a very great Moral difference (such as may be termed specifique) between those Acts which Naturally do differ only in Degree. I say, a Moral specifical difference is usually founded in a Natural Gradual difference. If you confound these two specifications, you will lose your selves in this Point.

Furthermore observe, that I say that sincerity of Grace, as saving, lieth in the Degree, not Formally, but, as it were [Materially] only. - For I told you before, the Form of it consisteth in their being, the Condition on which Salvation is promised. The form which we enquire after, is a Relation. As the Relation of our Actions to the Precept, is the form of their Virtuousness, *viz.* when they are such as are commanded: so the Relation of them to the Promise is the Form of them as [*Saving*] and so as [*Justifying.*] But because this Promise giveth not Salvation to the Act considered in its meer Being, and Natural sincerity, but to the Act as suted to its Object in its Essential respects; and that sutableness of the Act to the form of its Object consisteth onely in a certain Degree of the Act, seeing the lowest Degree cannot be so suted; Therefore I say that sincerity lieth, as it were materially, only in the Degree of those Acts, and not in the bare nature and being of it.

Lastly, Consider especially, that I say not that Sincerity lieth

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in the Degree of any Act *in it self* considered: as if God had promised Salvation to us, if we Love him so much, or up to such a height, considered *Absolutely*: But it is in the Degree considered *Comparatively*, as to God compared with other things, and as other Objects or Commanders stand in competition with him: and so it is in the Prevalency of the Act or Habit against all contraries.

SECT. XIII.

§. 13. HAving thus explained my meaning herein, the clearing of all this to you, and fuller confirmation, will be best dispatched these three waies. 1. By exemplifying in each particular Grace, and trying this Rule upon them severally. 2. By examining some of the most Ordinary Marks, which have been hitherto delivered, and Christians use to take comfort in. 3. By enquiring what Scripture saith in the Point. And after these I shall answer the Objections that are against it, and then shew you the Usefulness and Necessity of it, and Danger of the contrary.

1. The Graces of the Spirit in mans Soul, are either in the Understanding, or in the Will and Affections. Those in the Understanding (as Knowledge, Prudence, Assent to Gods Word, called Faith, *&c.*) I make no Question, are as truly Graces, and as proper to the Saints as those in the Will and Affections. Divers erre here on both extreams. Some say, That there is no special Grace in the Understanding, but in the Will only. Others say that all special Grace is in the Understanding, and that the Will is capable of nothing but Freedom to Choose or Refuse; and that it ever follows the last dictate of the practical Understanding, and therefore no more is needfull but to inform the Understanding. Others say, both Understanding and Will are the subject of special sanctifying Grace, and that in both it must be sought after, and may be discerned. Between these extreams, I conceive this is the Truth: Both Understanding and Will (that is, the whole soul which both Understandeth and Willeth) is truly sanctified where either is truly sanctified: and the several Acts of this sanctified soul, are called several actual Graces: But though

though Grace be in both Faculties (as they are called) yet is it certainly discernable onely in the Will, and not in the Understanding. For all Acts as they are meerly in the Understanding are but imperfectly Virtuous, being but Preparatory and Introductory to the Will, where they are digested and perfected, as I said before. Dr *Stoughton*'s words are these [*As for my own part, I could never comprehend that which Divines have gone about, to be able to put a Characteristical difference in the Nature of Knowledge, that a man may be able to say Such a Knowledge is, and such a Knowledge is not a saving Knowledge. But only, as I use to expresse it (the Sun is the greater Light, but the Moon hath greater Influence on Wateriſh Bodies:) So Knowledge, let it be what it will, if it be good and saving, it hath an influence on the Soul. There may be a great deal of Knowledge which is not Vital and Practical; which carrieth not the Heart and Affections along with it: and they that have it, have not saving Knowledge. But they that have the least degree of Knowledge, so it be such as hath an Influence to draw the Heart and Affections along with it, to Love God, and Obey God, it is solid and saving Knowledge.*] So Dr *Stoughton* in his *Righteous mans plea to Happiness*, p.38,39.

And for my part I know no Mark drawn from the meer nature of Knowledge, or Belief, or any meer Intellectual Act, by which we can discern it from what may be in an unholy person: Those that think otherwise, use to say, that the Knowledge and Belief which is saving is Deep, Lively, Operative, *&c.* I doubt not but this is true: But how by the Depth we shall discern the saving sincerity directly, I know not: Or how to discern it in the Livelineſs or Operativeneſs, but only in its Operations and Effects on the Will and Affections, I know not. Whether it be so Deep and Lively as to be saving, must not be discerned immediately in it self, but in its vital prevalent Operations on the Will. So that I shall dismiss all the meer Acts of the Understanding out of this Enquiry, as being not such as a Christian can try himself immediately by. And for them that say otherwise, they place the sincerity of them in the Depth and Livelineſs, that is, in the Degree of Knowledge and Belief. For no doubt a wicked man may Know and Believe every particular Truth, which a Christian doth Believe. Some Learned men I have heard affirm indeed, That no wicked man can Believe Scripture to be the Word of God;

God; but that's a fancy that I think needs no confutation; The Devils beleeve it no doubt. If any say, that saving Knowledge is Experimental, and other is not,

I answer, 1. Of matters of meer faith we have no experience: as that Christ is the second Person, was Incarnate, Crucified, Buried, Rose again, *&c.*

2. Of common practicals wicked men have experience: as that the world is deceitful, that man is prone to sinne, that Satan must be resisted, *&c.*

3. For those other special Internal Experiences which denominate a Christians Knowledge Experimental, the Mark of sincerity lieth in the experienced thing it self, rather then the Knowledge of it. For example, a Christian knows experimentally what the New-birth is, what it is to Love God, to Delight in him, *&c.* Now the Mark lieth not properly in his Knowledge of these, but in that Love, Delight and Renovation which he possesseth and so knoweth.

It follows therefore that we enquire into the Acts of the Will, and see wherein their saving sincerity doth consist. For except the Acts of the Understanding, all that may be called saving is reducible to those two words of St *Paul, To Will*, and *To Do*. For all the other Acts of the Soul, are nothing but *Velle & Nolle*: either exercised on the Object as variously presented and apprehended (as Absent or Present, Facil or Difficult, *&c.*) or exercised with that vigour as moveth the spirits in the heart, and denominates them Affections or Passions.

First therefore to begin with the proper Act of Willing. Though of our selves without Grace no man ever Willeth God in Christ, yet on this Willing hath God laid our Salvation, more then on any other Qualification or Act in our selves whatsoever. And yet simply to Will God, to Will Christ, to Will Heaven, is not a saving Act. But when God and the Creature stand in competition, to Will God above all, and to Will Christ above all, and Heaven before Earth, this is to Will savingly. That is: to Will God as God, the chief Good and Cause of Good: to Will Christ as Christ, the only Saviour and chief Ruler of us: and to Will Heaven as the state of our chief Happiness in the Glorifying enjoyment of God. Not that all the sincerity of these Acts lieth in the *Understandings apprehending* God to be the chief

Good and Cauſe of it: and Chriſt to be the only Redeemer, &c. For a man may Will that God and that *Chriſt who is* thus apprehended by the Uunderſtanding, and yet not Will him *as he is* thus apprehended. The Uunderſtanding may overgo the Will; and the Will not follow the Underſtanding; and this is no ſaving Willing. If a man do know and Believe never ſo much, that God is the chief Good, and do not chiefly Will him (as the Devils may ſo Believe) it is not ſaving. Yea it is a great Queſtion, Whether many do not Will God (not only *who* is apprehended to be the Supream Good, but alſo) *as* he is apprehended to be the Supream Good, and yet Love ſomething elſe more then him, which they know, *not* to be the chief Good, but againſt their Knowledge are drawn to it by the force of ſenſuality, and ſo theſe men periſh for all their Willing. For certainly, if God have not ordinarily the prevailing part of the Will, that mans ſtate is not good. When I ſay ſuch men Will God [*as*] apprehended to be the chief Good, I mean, they Will him under ſuch a Notion, but not with an Act of Will anſwering that Notion. I refer the term [*as*] to the underſtandings apprehenſion, but not ſo to the Wils action as if it loved him as the chief Good ſhould be loved or willed: for that's it, that is wanting, for which they periſh. I propound this to the Conſideration of the Judicious; for it is certainly worth our Conſideration. It depends on the common Queſtion, Whether the Will ever follow the laſt dictate of the Practical Intellect, which I ſhall handle elſwhere. What I have ſaid of Willing, you may eaſily perceive, may be ſaid of Deſire and Love, which are nothing but Willing. Love is an intenſe abſolute Willing of Good as Good: Deſire alſo is a Willing it as a Good not yet enjoyed. Therefore the ſaving ſincerity of both lieth in the ſame point: Many that periſh Deſire God, and Chriſt, and Heaven; and Love God, and Chriſt, and Heaven: but they deſire and love ſome Inferiour Good more: He that deſireth and loveth God ſincerely and ſavingly, deſireth him and loveth him above all things elſe: and there lieth his ſincerity.

I need not inſtance in Hope, Fear, Hatred, or any of the Acts or Paſſions of the Iraſcible: For they are therefore good becauſe they ſet againſt the Difficulty which is in the way of their attainment to that Good which they Will and Love: and ſo their chief Virtu-

Virtuousnes lieth in that Will or Love which is contained in them, or supposed to them. A wicked man may Fear God, but the Fear of men or temporal evils is more prevalent in the trial. He may have an Aversation of his minde from sinne, or some low Degree of Hatred, as it is known to him to be evil, and to hurt him: but his Love to it is greater, and prevaileth against his Hatred. If any doubt whether a wicked man may have the least Hatred of sin, (yea as sin, or as displeasing to God) we are sure of it two wayes.

1. By daily experience of some Drunkards, that when they are considering how much they sinne against God, and wrong themselves, their hearts rise against their own sin (especially if the temptation be out of sight) and they will weep, and be ready to tear their own flesh: And yet yield to the next temptation, and live weekly in the committing of the sin.

2. By the experience of our own hearts before our Sanctification (those that were not sanctified in Infancy:) many have felt that their hearts had some weak degree of dislike and hatred to the sin that captivated them. And I know divers Swearers and Drunkards that do so hate the same sins in their children, that they are ready to fall on them violently if they commit them.

3. And we may know it by reason too. For whatsoever a man may know to be evil, that his Will may have some hatred (or aversation) towards: (though not enough) But a wicked man may know sin to be Evil: Therefore he may have some hatred to it. The Will may sure follow the Understanding a little way, though it do not farre enough. But me thinks those should not contradict this, that are for the Wils constant determination by the Understanding.

The like I may say also of Repentance: so much of it as lieth in the Will; that is, the Wills turning from Inferiour Good (which it formerly chose) to God the supream Good, whom it now chooseth. The sincerity of this lieth in the prevailing Degree. For if it be not such a Change as carryeth the Will more now to God then the Creature, but to God a little, and to the Creature still more, it is not saving. And if it be not a choosing of God before the Creature, though it be a choosing of God in the second place, it will not serve turn. And for that Repentance which consisteth in a sorrow for sin, 1. If it be not to such a

Degree, that it prevail over our Delight in sin and Love to it, it is not saving. Many wicked men do daily repent and sin: I have known men that would be drunk almost daily, and some seven or eight daies continue in one fit of drunkenness before ever they were sober, and yet lament it with tears and pray daily against it; and being men of much knowledge and able parts, would confess it and condemn themselves in very moving language, and yet no means could keep them from it, but they have lived in it some ten some twenty years. Who dare think that this was true Repentance, when the Apostle concludes, *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die*, Rom. 8. 6, 13. 2. Yet I must tell you, that all these Graces which are expressed by Passions, as Sorrow, Fear, Joy, Hope, Love, are not so certainly to be tried by the *Passion* that is in them, as by the *Will* that is either contained in them, or supposed to them: not as Acts of the *sensitive*, but of the *Rational* appetite. I will not here stand on the Question, Whether Grace be in the sensitive or Rational appetite, as its subject, or both: *Burgersdicius* and others, say, that Moral Virtue is in the sensitive only: but something like it in the Will: but Theologicall Virtues are in the Will. But doubtless if he do prove Moral Virtue to be in the sensitive, he will prove a proportionable measure of Theological Virtue, to be there too. For there is no Virtue, truly so called, which is not Theological as well as Moral.

But if there be any doubt whether an unregenerate man may perform the same Acts as a true Christian, it will be especially about the two great and principal graces of *Faith* and *Love*. And for that of Faith, I have said enough before. It consisteth (according to the Judgement of most Reformed Divines) partly in the Understanding, partly in the Will. As it is in the Understanding it is called Assent or Belief: And for this I have shewed before, that a wicked man may have it in some degree: and that Grace as it is in the Understanding cannot be discerned directly; but only as it thence produceth those Acts in the Will wherein it may be discerned. There is no one Truth which a true Christian may know, but a wicked man may also know it (though not with that lively degree of Knowledge which will over-rule the Heart and Life.) Nor is there any one Truth which a true Christian may Believe, but a wicked man may also Believe it. If any deny this, let them name me one. And do not our Divines confess

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as much against the Papists, who place Faith in bare Assent? And And do they not expound *James* (the devils Believe) of such an Assent? If this were not so, it were an easier matter to try and know ones own sincerity, and so to have Assurance of Salvation. For we might presently name such or such an Axiom (as, that The Scripture is the Word of God, or the like,) and ask whether we do Know or Believe this to be True? and so might quickly be resolved. For it is the Heart (or Will) that is deceitfull above all things: but the bare Acts of the Understanding, may more easily be discerned; as whether we Know or Assent to such an Axiom, or not: (Though I know also that even the Understanding participateth of the guilefulnes, and may be somewhat strange to it self.)

But some will say, that no wicked man can Believe the pardon of his own sins; or assent to the truth of this Axiome [*My sins are pardoned.*] *Answ.* I confess so many have harped on this string heretofore, that I am ashamed that the Papists should reade it in our writings, and thereby have that occasion of hardening them in their Errors, and of insulting over the Reformed Doctrine. I confess no wicked man (*in sensu composito*) can Believe *for* the pardon of sin; or hath such a Faith as pardon is promised to: But that they may Believe their sins *are* pardoned, and seriously believe it, did not Error make it necessary, I should be ashamed to bestow any words to prove it. 1. A wicked man may (in my judgement, without any great difficulty) Believe an untruth, especially which he would fain have to be true (though every untruth he cannot believe:) But this is an untruth to every wicked man [that his sins are pardoned] (or even by the Antinomians confession it is untrue of all wicked men not elected;) and an untruth which he would fain have to be true: (for what man is so perverse in his fancies, as to doubt whether a wicked man would have his sins pardoned?) therefore he may Believe it. 2. That which is one of the chief pillars in the kingdom of the devil, and the master, deceiving, damning sin, is not sure inconsistent with a wicked mans condition: But even such is the ungrounded Belief that his sins are pardoned (commonly called presumption, and false faith:) Therefore, &c. 3. If it be the main work of a skilfull, faithfull Ministry, to beat wicked men from such an ungrounded Belief, and experience tels us that all means

Quamvis quis non habet veram & salvificam in Christo fidem, potest tamen in professione & doctrina veritatis, bonam habere conscientiam, ita ut sciat veram esse illam doctrinam quam profitetur & docet, &c. Triglandius *de Trina Gratia pag.* 943

will hardly to it; (and yet that God doth it on all before he bring them by the Ministry to true Conversion,) then sure it is more then possible for a wicked man to have such a Belief. But Scripture, and a world of lamentable experience proves the Antecedent (what do such Writings as *Hookers, Boltons, Whateleys*, &c. else drive at?) Therefore, *&c.* 4. Yea that the pardon of sin is not properly *Credendum* or a Material Object of Faith, I have proved elsewhere, and therefore need not stand on it now.

2. And for those Acts of Faith which are directly in and by the Will, I know not one of them (considered in the nature of the Act, without the prevalent Degree) which a wicked man may not perform. For the most proper and immediate Act [Willing] which containeth a Choice of Christ and a Consent that he shall be ours, together with his Benefits, this I have before made manifest to be consistent with an unregenerate state. If any will affirm that a wicked man cannot be Willing to have pardon of all his sins, Justification and Salvation from hell, I think it not worth my writing six lines to confute them; sense will do it sufficiently. That this man cannot Desire, or Choose, or Will Holiness, and Glory with Christ more heartily, strongly and prevailingly then his pleasures or inferiour good, I easily acknowledge: For in that gradual defect consisteth his unsoundness. But that he may Will, Choose, Accept or Desire Holiness and Glory in a second place, next to his carnal delights or inferiour good, is to me beyond doubt. And accordingly for the obtaining of these, he may Will or Accept of Christ himself that gives them. This I shall prove anon, when we speak of Love.

Notitiam & Assensum quendam non Calvinus tantum, sed & Remonstr. ipsi tribuunt etiam Dæmonibus. Fiduciam male fundatæ, electionis opinio, & fructus evanidi, qui sine bono & honesto corde existunt, non magis arguunt temporarios esse verè fideles, quam similitudo probat simiã esse ex genere humano. Aracius *Antisynod. in Art. 5. c. 3. pag. (mihi) 354.*

And for that Act of Faith which most affirm to be peculiarly the Justifying Act, that is, Affiance, Resting on Christ, Recumbency, Adherence, Apprehension of him, *&c.* these (almost all Metaphorical) terms, contain not one, but many Acts, all which are most frequently found in the ungodly. For we undoubtedly know it, 1. by experience of our selves whilest we were in their state, 2. and by constant experience of the vilest sinners, that they not only undissemblingly Rest on Christ (that is, Trust verily to be pardoned and saved by him, and expect it from him,) but also that this is the strongest encouragement to them in sinning, and we have need to lay all our batteries against this Bulwork of Presumption. Alas, to the grief of my soul, my frequent and

and almost daily experience forceth me to know this, whatsoever men write from their speculations to the contrary. I labour with my utmost skill to convince common Drunkards, Swearers, Worldlings, *&c.* of their misery, and I cannot do it for my life: and this false faith is the main reason. They tell me [I know I am a sinner, and so are you, and all, as well as I, but *if* any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: I put my whole trust in him, and cast my salvation on him, for *he that Believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting Life.*] If I tell them of the nature of true Faith, and the necessity of Obedience, They answer me that they know their own hearts better then I, and are sure they do really Rest on Christ and trust him with their Souls; and for Obedience they will mend as well as they can, and as God will give them Grace; and in the mean time they will not boast as the Pharisee, but cry, Lord be mercifull to me a sinner: and that I shall never drive them from Believing and Trusting in Christ for Mercy, because they be not so good as others, when Christ tels them, that men are not Justified by Works, but by Faith, and he that believeth shall be saved.] This is the case of the most notorious sinners (many of them) and I am most confident, they speak as they think: and from this ungrounded confidence in Christ, I cannot remove them. Where now is any difference in the nature of this Affiance, and that of true Believers? If you say, that it brings not forth fruit, and therefore is unsound, that's true: but that's only an extrinsecall difference in the effects, and speaks not the difference in the nature of the Act it self. But I have spoken of this more fully elsewhere.

But the greatest doubt is, whether in Loving God and Christ as Mediator, there be not more then a gradual difference between the regenerate and unregenerate? And I shall shew you that there is not. For it is undeniable that an unholy person may Love God and the Mediator: and as undeniable that they cannot Love God above all, till they are Regenerate. The later I take for granted: The former if any deny is thus proved. 1. That which the Understanding apprehendeth to be Good, both in it self and to the person, that the Will may in some measure Love. But an unregenerate mans Understanding may apprehend God to be

Learned *Rivet* saith the very same as I of the difference between a temporary & true Believer. *Discrimen ergo inter eos & vere fideles hoc est, quod quamvis utriq; ex animo verbum amplectantur, non tamen utriq; ex tali animo,* quo aliis omnibus verbum præferatur, *Nam πρόσκαιροι* leviter & perfunctorie *credunt, &c. unde est quod* vitam suam amant plus quam Christum: *fiatq; ut securi sint, nec sibi caveant ab insidiis Diaboli: deinde ut in precibus, gratiarum actione, & omnibus erga proximum officiis* languidi fiant, & remissi: *Cum Justificans Fides etiam* Imbecilla, *sollicita sit, nec credentem animo elato esse sinat; studiumq; precum excitet,* illudq; anxium & intentum. *Rivet. Disput. de Persever. Sanct.* §. 16. pag. 210, 211.

Good

Good both in himself and to the person: Therefore he may in some measure Love him. That wicked men may Believe that God is Good, is no more to be doubted of, then that they may Believe there is a God. For he that Believeth there is a God, must needs believe that he is Good. And that he may Believe that God is Good to him, also is evident thus. 1. Men know that they have all their temporal corporal Mercies from God (which are to them the sweetest of all;) and therefore for these, and the continuance of them they may apprehend God to be Good to them, and so love him. 2. And Scripture and constant experience tels us, that it is usuall with wicked men, not only to apprehend the goodness of prosperity, but thence mistakingly to gather, that God doth specially favour and love them as his people to Salvation. 3. Also nothing is more common with them almost, then from the thoughts of Gods Mercifulness and Goodness, and from mistaking seeming evidences in themselves, to conclude most confidently that their sins are pardoned, and that God will not condemn them, but will save them as certainly as any other. Also that Christ having died in their stead, and made satisfaction for all their sins, they shall through him be pardoned, Justified and Saved. Many a wicked man doth as confidently Believe that God loveth him through Christ, and doth as confidently thank God daily in his prayers for Vocation, Adoption, Justification, and assured hope of Glory, as if they were all his own indeed. Nay out of the apprehensions of some extraordinary Love and Mercy of God to him above others, he oft giveth thanks as the Pharisee, *Lord, I thank thee, that I am not as this Publican.* And doubtless all these apprehensions of Love may produce some Love to God again. As the grounded Faith and Hope of the Godly produceth a solid saving Love, so the ungrounded Faith and Hope of the wicked, produceth a sleight and common Love, agreeable to the cause of it. As Christ hath a common Love to the better sort of wicked men more then to the worst (he looked on the young man, (*Mark* 10. 21,22.) and Loved him, and said, *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God*) so may such men have a common love to Christ, and that above the ordinary sort of the ungodly. For I am perswaded there is no man so wicked among us (who Believeth indeed that Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour) but he hath some love to Christ more or less.

For

For 4. God hath been pleased to give those advantages to the Christian Religion above all other Religions among us, which may easily procure some Love to Christ from ungodly men. It is the Religion of our Country: It is a credit to be a Christian: It is the Religion of our Ancestors, of our Parents and dearest Friends: It is that which Princes favour, and all men speak well of: Christ is in credit among us: Every man acknowledgeth him to be God, and the Redeemer of the world: And therefore on the same grounds (or better) as a *Turk* doth love and honour *Mahomet*, and a *Jew Moses*, may a wicked Christian in some kinde Love and Honour Christ: yea and venture his life against that man that will speak against him: as Dr *Jackson* and Mr *Pink* have largely manifested.

If any object, that it is not God or Jesus Christ that these men Love, but his Benefits: I answer, It is God and the Redeemer for his Benefits. Only here is the unsoundness which undoes them, They Love his inferiour earthly blessings better then him; and for this they perish.

SECT. XIV.

HAving thus viewed these severall Graces, and found, that It is the prevalent Degree wherein their Sincerity, as they are Saving, doth consist; I will next briefly try this point upon some of the ordinary Marks of Sincerity besides that are given by Divines. In which I shall not speak a word in quarrellin g at other mens judgements (for I shall speak but of those that I was wont to make use of my self:) but only what I conceive necessary to prevent the delusion and destruction of souls. §. 14.

1. One Mark of Sincerity commonly delivered is this: To love the children of God because they are such. I the rather name this because many a soul hath been deluded about it. Multitudes of these that since are turned haters and persecutors of the Godly, did once, without dissembling, love them. Yea multitudes that are killing them by thousands (when they differ from them in opinion, or stand in the way of their carnal interest) did once love them, and do love others of them still. I have proved before that a wicked man may have some love to Christ, and then

no doubt but he may have some love to a Christian, and that for his sake. *Quest.* But may he love a Godly man for his godliness? *Answ.* Yes, no doubt: Those before-mentioned did so. If a wicked man may have some degree of love to godliness, then he may have some degree of love to the Godly for it: But that he may have some degree of love to godliness is evident, 1. by experience of others, and of the Godly before conversion, who know this was their own case. 2. The understanding of an ungodly man may know that Grace and Godliness is good, and therefore his Will may in some degree choose and affect it. 3. That which drew moral Heathens so strongly to love men for their Virtue and Devotion, the same principle may as well draw a man that is bred among Christians, to love a Christian for his Virtues and Devotion to Christ.

Object. But doth not the Scripture say, that we know we are *translated from death to life, because we love the Brethren?*

Answ. Yes, But then you may easily know it speaks of sincere Love. So it saith, *Whosoever believeth shall be saved:* And yet *Matth.* 13. Christ sheweth that many Believe who yet fall away and perish for want of deep rooting. So that the Sincerity of this love also lieth in the Degree, and therefore when the promise is made to it, or it made a mark of true Christians, you must still understand it of that Degree which may be called Sincere and Saving. The difference lieth plainly here. An unsound Christian, as he hath some Love to Christ, and Grace and Godliness, but more to his Profits or Pleasures or Credit in the world, so he hath some Love to the Godly (as such, being convinced that the Righteous is more excellent then his neighbour;) but not so much as he hath to these carnal things. Whereas the sound Christian, as he Loves Christ and Grace above all worldly things; so it is Christ in a Christian that he so Loves, and the Christian for Christs sake, above all such things. So that when a carnal professor will think it enough to [a] wish them well, but will not hazzard his worldly happiness for them (if he were called to it) the Sincere Believer will not only Love them, but Relieve them, and value them so highly, that if he were called to it, he would part with his Profits or Pleasures for their sakes. For example, In Queen *Maries* daies, when the Martyrs were condemned to the fire, there were many Great men that really loved them, and wished

[a] *If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say to them, Depart in peace; be you warmed and filled: but give them not those things which are needfull to the body, &c.* Jam. 2.15,16. *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the Brethren. But who so hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Let us not Love in word and tongue, but in deed and in Truth.* 1 Joh. 3.16,17,18.

wished them well, and their hearts grieved in pity for them, as knowing them to be in the right: But yet they loved their Honour and Wealth and Safety so much better, that they would sit on the Bench, yea and give sentence for their burning, for fear of hazzarding their Worldly happiness. Was this Sincere Saving Love to the Brethren? Who dare think so? especially in them that went on to do thus. Yet what did it want but a more intense degree, which might have prevailed over their love to carnal things? Therefore Christ will not at the last Judgement, enquire after the bare act of Love: but whether it so far prevailed over our Love to carnal interest, as to bring us to Relieve, Clothe, Visit them, *&c.* (and Christ in them) that is, to part with these things for them when we are called to it. Not that every man that loves the Godly is bound to give them all he hath in their necessity: For God hath directed us in what order to bestow and lay out our estates; and we must begin at our selves, and so to our families, *&c.* so that God may call for our estates some other waies. But (mark it, you false-hearted worldlings) he that doth not so much love the ordinary sort of the Godly (and Christ in them) as that he can finde in his heart to bestow all his worldly substance for their relief, if God did not require him otherwise to expend it, this man hath no saving Love to the Godly. If therefore you would not cheat your selves (as multitudes in this age have done) about your Love to the Brethren, try not by the bare act, but by the radicated prevalent degree of your Love.

2. Another ordinary Mark of Sincerity is this, [When a man is the same in secret before God alone, as he is in publike before men: making conscience of secret as well as open duties.] But, no doubt, as many a godly man may be the more restrained from sin, and incited to Good, from publike (and perhaps carnal) motives, and so may be better in appearance publikely then he is in secret (for all men have some hypocrisie in them;) so many an unregenerate man may make conscience of secret duties as well as open; yea even of the thoughts of his heart. But still both secret duties and open are at the dispose of his carnal interest; for he will follow them no further then is consistent with that: so that this Mark doth but shew a mans sincerity in opposition to gross hypocrisie or dissembling, but not the sincerity of grace as it is saving.

3. Another ordinary Mark of sincerity is thus delivered: [When a man loves the closest and most searching preaching of the Word, and that which putteth on to the highest Degree of Holiness.] If he therefore Love it, because it putteth himself on to the Highest Degree of Holiness, and so far Love it, as that he is Willing to be searched, and put on by it, and if he therefore come to this Light, that he may know his Evil thereby, that he may mortifie it, and may get Christ and his Interest advanced in his Soul; then it is a sign that he hath that Degree which I have mentioned wherein sincerity of saving Grace doth consist: But many a wicked man doth Love a searching Preacher in other respects, and one that draweth men to the highest strain; partly, because he may Love to have other men searched, and their Hypocrisie discovered, and be put on to the highest: And partly because himself may be of, and delight in the highest strain of Opinion, though his heart will not be true to his Principles. Nay many a man thinks that he may the more safely be a little more indulgent to his Carnal Interest in Heart and Life, because he is of the strictest Opinion: and therefore may Love to hear the strictest Preachers. His Conscience is so blinde and dull in the Application, that he can easily over-look the inconsistency of his Judgement, and his Heart, and Practice. O how glad is he when he hears a rowsing Sermon, because, thinks he, this meets with such a man, or such a man; this fits the profane, and the lower sort of Professors. So that in these respects he may Love a searching Preacher.

4. Another common Mark of Sincerity is [When a man hath no known sin which he is not Willing to part with.] This is a true and sound Mark indeed. For it signifieth not only a dislike, nor only a hatred of sin, but such a Degree as is prevalent in the Will, as I have before described: That Christs Interest in the Will is prevalent over all the Interest of the Flesh. So that this is but in effect the same Mark that I have before delivered. Except this Willingness to part with all sin should be but a cold unconstant Wish, which is accompanied with a greater and more prevalent Love to it, and Desire to enjoy it: and then who dare think that it is any Mark of saving Sincerity? The like I might say of Hatred to sin, Love to Good, and many the like Marks: That the Sincerity lieth in the prevalent Degree: So also of the Spirit of Prayer

er(which is another Mark)the Spirit of Prayer so far as it is proper to the Saints, lieth in Desire after the things prayed for (with the other Graces which in Prayer are exercised)For an Hypocrite may have as excellent words as the best, and as many of them. Now these Desires must be such prevalent Desires, as is aforesaid.

I think if I could stand to mention all the other Marks of Grace (so far as I remember:) it would appear that the Life and Truth of them all lieth in this one, as being the very point wherein saving sincerity doth consist, *viz.* in the prevalency of Christs Interest in the soul above the Interest of Inferiour Good: and so in the Degree, and not in the bare Nature of any Act.

SECT. XV.

§. 15.

3. TO this end let us, (but briefly) enquire further into the Scripture-way of discovering Sincerity, and see whether it do not fully confirm what I say. *Matth.* 10. 37. Christ saith, *He that loveth Father or Mother more then me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth Son or Daughter more then me*, &c. So *Luk.* 14. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not* (that is, Love them not less) *his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, and his own Life, he cannot be my Disciple: And Whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after me, cannot be my Disciple.* So *vers.* 33. *Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not All that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.* Here you see Sincerity is plainly laid, not in meer Love to Christ, but in the prevalent Degree of Love, as Christ is compared to other things. And for Obedience Christ shews it, *Matth.* 25. *Luk.* 19.20, &c. Therefore Christ saith, *Luk.* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter, and not be able.* Seeking comes short of striving in the Degree. And *Paul* saith, *They which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the Prize: So run that ye may obtain*, 1 Cor. 9.24. So *vers.* 26,27. & *Heb.* 12. 1. And Christ commandeth, *Matth.* 6.33. *Seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousnesse:* Shewing plainly, That the saving Sincerity of our seeking lieth in this comparative Degree; in preferring Gods Kingdom before the things below So he saith, *Joh.* 6.27. *Labour not for the meat that perisheth* (*not*, in comparison) *but for the meat that endureth to Everlasting life, which the Son will*

give you. So *Heb.*11.6,14,16,25,26,35. & 13.14. *Col.* 3. 1. *Rom.* 2.7. *Luk.*17.33. & 12.30,31. *Amos* 5.4,8,14. *Isa.*58.2,3. & 1.17. *Prov.*8.17. *Psal.*119.2. Also a hundred places might be produced, wherein Christ sets himself still against the world as his competitor, and promiseth Life on the Condition that we prefer him before it. To this end are all those precepts for suffering, and bearing the Cross, and denying our selves, and forsaking all. The Merchant that buieth this Pearl must sell All that he hath to buy it (though he give nothing for it.) All the beginning of *Rom.*8. as *Vers.*1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,13,14. do fully shew, that our work and warfare lieth in a perpetual combat between the Flesh and Spirit, between their several Interests, Motives, Ends and Desires: and that which prevaileth shews what we are: When the flesh prevaileth finally it is certain Death; and where the Spirit prevaileth, it is certain Life. What can be more plain, then that Sincerity of Grace, as saving, is here placed in the Comparative or Prevailing Degree? So also *Gal.*5.17,24. *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary one to the other. But they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.* Therefore are we charged, *Rom.*13.14. *To make no provision for the Flesh to satisfie its lusts.* So 1 *Joh.*2.16. *Ephes.*2.3. *Gal.*5.16,17,18,19. *Joh.*1.13. & 3.6. And Christ shews fully, *Matth.* 13. 5, 20, *&c.* that the difference between those that fall away, and those that persevere proceedeth hence, that one giveth deep Rooting to the Gospel, and the other doth not. The seed is rooted in both, or else it would not bring forth a blade and imperfect fruit: But the stony ground gives it not *deep* rooting, which the good ground doth. Doth not this make it as plain as can be spoken, that sincerity lieth in Degree, and not in any Physical difference either of Habits or Acts? The like may be gathered from all those Texts of Scripture, where Salvation is promised to those that *Overcome*; or on Condition of Overcoming: Not to all that fight; but to all that Overcome: as *Revel.*2.7,11,17,26. & 3.5,12,21. & 21.7. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.* So 1 *Joh.*5.4,5. *He that is born of God, Overcometh the World. And they Overcome the Wicked One,* 1 Joh.2.13. & 4.4. So *Luk.*11.22. And the state of wicked men is described by their being Overcome by sin and the world, 2 *Pet.*2.19,20.

Fighting

Fighting is the same Action naturally in both: but the valiant, strong and constant, conquer; when the feeble, faint, and cowardly, and impatient do turn their backs, and are overcome. So Christ saith, *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by force.* Now Violence is not any distinct Action, but a different Degree of Action. Nor can you say, that all these places speak only of outward Action: For no doubt but it is Inward Violence more then outward, and the Inward Actions of the soul intended, more then the Motions of the body, which lay hold on the Kingdom, and make us Conquerours. So the Saints are described in Scripture by such Gradual and Prevalent differing Acts. As *David: Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none in Earth that I desire in comparison of thee,* Psal. 73. 26, 27. *Thy loving kindness is better then life,* Psal. 63. 3. *The Lord is my Portion,* &c. A wicked man may esteem God and his Loving kindness; but not as his Portion, nor better then Life. So the wicked are called *Lovers of Pleasure more then God,* 2 Tim 3. 4. The Godly may Love Pleasure, but not more then God. The Pharisees Loved the Praise of men *more* then the Honour which is from God, *Joh.* 12. 43. A Godly man may Love the Praise of Men; but not More, *&c.* See also *Job* 3. 21. *&* 23. 12. *Psal.* 47. *&* 19. 10. *&* 52. 3. *&* 119. 72. Very many more Texts might be produced which prove this Point, but these may suffice.

SECT. XVI.

5. THe next thing which I have to do, is to answer those Objections which may be brought against it, and which, I confess, have sometime seemed of some weight to my self. §. 16.

Object 1. Do not all Divines say, That it is not the measure of Grace, but the Truth; not the Quantity, but the Quality that we must judge our selves by: and doth not Christ say, That he despiseth not the day of small things, and that he will not quench the smoaking flax; and if we had Faith, which is as a grain of mustard-seed, we may do wonders, *&c?*

Answ. All this is true of sincere Grace, but not of unsincere: Now I have shewed you, that except it be of a prevalent Degree, it is not savingly sincere. If you Love God a Little, and the

the World a great deal more, will any man dare to think that this is a sincere saving Love? When the Scripture saith, *He that loveth the World, the Love of the Father is not in him:* that is, there is no sincere saving Love in him: For no doubt the young man had some Love to Christ, that yet forsook him, because he Loved the world more: Or else, 1. Christ would not have loved him; 2. Nor would the man have gone away from him in sorrow. But if you Love Christ ever so little more then the world or inferiour Good, though it be but as a grain of Mustard-seed, it will be saving and Christ will accept it. *Cicero* can tell you, That Friendship, or the sincerity of Love to a friend, consisteth not in every Act and Degree of undissembled Love. If a man Love you a little, and a thousand men much more, or if he love his wealth so much better then you, that he cannot finde in his heart to be at any loss for your sake, this man is not your friend: He doth truly *Love* you, but he hath no true sincere *Friendship*, or *Friendly Love* to you: For that consisteth in such a Degreee as will enable a man to Do and Suffer for his Friend. If a woman love her Husband without dissembling, but yet Loves twenty men better, and prostitutes her self to them, she hath true *Love*, but not *true Conjugal Love* to her husband: For that consisteth in a higher Degree. "In a word, Lay Christ (as it were) in one end of the "Balance in your estimation, and all your carnal Interest, and all "Inferiour Good, in the other, and see which you Love most; and "every grain of Love which Christ hath from you more then the "world and Inferiour things, he will Accept it as sincere: And in this sense, you must not judge of your selves by the Measure of your Grace, but by the Truth: that is, not by any higher Degree, if you have once that Degree which makes it True and saving. And I do not think that you will meet with any sober Divine that will tell you, that if you will Love God never so little without dissembling, yet he will Accept it, though you Love your lusts before him. Nor will any sober man tell you, that if you Love the Godly without dissembling, God will accept it, though you love your carnal Interest so much better, that if they hunger or thirst, or are naked, or in want, you cannot finde in your heart to relieve them, or if they be in prison for a good cause, you dare not be seen to visit them.

Obj. 2. But (perhaps you'l say) if this be so, then there is no specifique

cifique difference between Saving Grace and Common.

Answ. I told you before, that you must distinguish betwixt a Physical specification, and a Moral: The confounding of our Physicks and Ethicks in Divinity, hath made and continued abundance of controversies, and much confusion. In a word, there is a Moral specifique difference grounded but in a Physical Gradual difference, both of Habits and Acts, as is already more fully opened.

Object. 3. But (you may say) if there be but such a difference in Degrees, then how can a man know the truth of his Grace or ever get Assurance. For who can discern just the parting point: who can say, just such a degree of Love or Faith is sincere and saving, and the next Degree short of it, is not?

Answ. This Objection being of most weight, I shall answer it in these Propositions.

1. Where the prevailing Degree is not discernable, there no true Assurance can be had, in an ordinary way. And where it is very hard to discern the Degree, there it will be as hard to get Assurance.

2. Therefore those that have the smallest Degree of saving Grace, do not use to have any Assurance of salvation. Assurance is the Priviledge of stronger Christians, and not of weak ones, or of all that shall be saved. A Little is hardly discernable from none in nature.

3. And it seemeth that the reason of Gods disposal herein is very evident. For if God should let men clearly see the Least measure of Love, Faith, Fear, or Obedience that is saving, and the greatest measure of sin that will stand with sincerity; and say, Just so far thou maist sin, or maist deny me thy Love, and yet be saved and sincere; then it might have been a strong temptation to men to sin as far as ever they may, and to neglect their Graces. I know some will say, That Assurance breeds not security: But that great measure of corruption which liveth with our small measure of Grace, will make Assurance an occasion of security and boldness in sinning. A strong Christian may bear and improve Assurance: but so cannot the weakest. And therefore God useth not to give Assurance to weakest Christians.

But then mistake me not, but remember that by weak Christians I do not mean those that are weak in gifts and common parts and expressions, nor by strong Christians, those that excel in these.

Those are weak Christians that have no more Love to God, nor Desire after Christ, then will just stand with sincerity: and that have as much Love to the world and flesh, and take as much Liberty to sin, as ever will stand with Salvation. And those are strong Christians, that strongly Love God, and have mortified and mastered their corruptions.

4. Where Grace is thus strong and in a great degree, there it is easily discernable; and therefore to such, Assurance is ordinary (except in a fit of Temptation, Revolting, or Desertion.)

5. But the chief part of my Answer is this. It is not the Degree of Grace *Absolutely in it self* considered, wherein sincerity doth consist, nor which we must enquire after in trial: But it is the Degree in a *Comparative* sense; as when we compare God and the Creature, and consider which we Desire, Love, Fear, *&c.* more; And therefore here it is far easier to try by the Degree. You know that Gold is not currant, except it be weight, as well as pure mettal. Now if you put your Gold in one end of the scales, and nothing in the other; you cannot judge whether it be weight or no: But if you put the weights against it, then you may discern it. If it be down-right weight, you may discern it without either difficulty or doubt: If it be but a grain over-weight, you may yet discern it: Though it is possible it may be so little, that the scales will scarce turn, and then you will not discern it so easily, which is the heavier end. But if it want much, then you will as easily on the other side, discern the defectiveness. So it is here. If God had said absolutely, So much Love you must have to me, or you cannot be saved, then it were hard to know when we reach the Degree. But you must (as I said) put Christ and Heaven in one end, and all things below in the other, and then you may well finde out the sincerity in the Degree. Every grain that Christ hath more then the creature, is sincere and saving.

SECT. XVII.

S. 17. 6. LAstly, having thus given you my judgement in this great Point, I will give you some hint of the necessity of it, and the danger of mistaking in this case.

And

And, 1. I am certain that the Ignorance of this Point hath occasioned the delusion of Multitudes of men: Even common prophane men (much more those that are not farre from the Kingdom of God) when they hear, that it is not the Quantity or Measure of Grace, that we must try by, but the Quality; and that the least seed or spark is saving as well as the greatest Degree, they are preiently confident of the soundness of their estates. Alas, how many have I known thus deceived? when they have heard that the least true Desire is accepted with God for the Deed: They knew that they had Desires that were not counterfeit, and therefore doubted not but God did accept them; when in the mean time their Desires to Pleasure, and Profits, and Honour was so much stronger, that it overcame their weak Desires after God and Goodness, and made them live in the daily practice of gross sin: And they knew not that the sincerity of their Desire did lie in the prevailing Degree. God doth indeed Accept the Will for the Deed, and the best are fain to cry out with *Paul*, To Will is present with me, but to Do I finde not (in regard of those higher parts of spiritual Duty, and in the avoiding of divers Infirmities and Passions:) But then it is only the Prevailing bent, and Act of the Will which is thus accepted.

So have, I know, multitudes been deceived by their small Degree of Love to the Godly, hearing that the least was a certain sign of Grace, and knowing themselves to Love them without counterfeiting, who yet have since been carried to be their constant Persecutours, and shed their bloud. The like I may say of other Marks. And doth it not concern people then to be better grounded in this?

2. And doubtless the mistake of this hath caused many a sincere Christian to take up their Comforts on deceitful grounds, which accordingly prove deceitful Comforts, and leave them oft in a sorrowful case (though not in a damnable) when they come to make use of them. Satan knows how to shake such ill-grounded Comforts; and he usually doth it in a mans greatest agonies, letting them stand till then, that he may have advantage by their fall for our greater terrour. When he can put a poor Christian to a loss many times that hath the soundest Evidences, what may he do by those that either have none but unsound ones, or know them not at least?

3. Moreover the Ignorance of this Truth hath cauſed ſome Miniſters to wrong the Holy God, and abuſe poor ſouls, and miſapply the Promiſes; Abſolving thoſe whom God condemneth: by miſtaking the meaning of that ſaying, That the leaſt Degree is ſaving as well as the greateſt: which is true only of the leaſt prevailing Degree; but not of the greateſt that is overmaſtered by the Prevalency of its contrary.

4. And to my knowledge this hath been no ſmall hinderance to many to keep them from fruitfulneſs and growth in Grace. They have been more ſecurely contented with their low degree: whereas if they had known that their very ſincerity lieth in the Prevalency of the Degree, they would have looked more after it. For them that ſay, that Aſſurance will make men ſtrive for Increaſe: I anſwered before: * If there were no contrary corruption in ſtrength in us, then I confeſs it would be as they ſay.

* I unfeignedly acknowledge with the Synod of *Dort* (*Act. de Art.* 5. *Theſ.* 12. *p.* 260) that to thoſe Chriſtians that God judgeth fit t: enjoy Aſſurance, it is no in-let to ſecurity or licentiouſneſs, but a great exciter of their Graces. But I think it would be farre otherwiſe to thoſe that are unfit to enjoy and uſe it: that is, to the lower and worſer ſort of ſincere Chriſtians.

5. And laſtly, The Ignorance of this hath been no ſmall cauſe of keeping the Godly in low Degrees of Aſſurance and comfort, by keeping them from the right way of attaining them. If they had conſidered, that, both the ſaving ſincerity of their Graces lieth in the Prevailing Degree, and alſo that the higher Degree they attain, the clearer and more unqueſtionable will be their Evidence, and conſequently, the eaſier and more infallible will be their Aſſurance; this would have taught them, to have ſpent thoſe thoughts and hours in labouring after growth in Grace, which they ſpent in enquiring after the loweſt Degree which may ſtand with ſincerity, and in ſeeking for that in themſelves which was almoſt undiſcernable.

To Conclude: This Doctrine is exceeding comfortable to the poor ſoul that groans, and mourns, and longs for Chriſt; and knows, that though he be not what he ſhould and would be, yet he would be what he ſhould be; and had rather have Chriſt then all the world. God hath the Prevailing Degree of this mans Will, Deſire and Love.

And as neceſſary is this Doctrine for Caution to all, that as they love their ſouls, they take heed, how they Try and Judge of their condition, by the bare nature of any Diſpoſitions or Actions, without regard to the Prevalency of Degree.

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I adviſe all Chriſtians therefore in the Fear of God, as ever they would have Aſſurance and Comforts that will not deceive them, that they make it the main work of their lives to Grow in Grace, to ſtrengthen and advance Chriſts Intereſt in their ſouls, and to weaken and get down the Intereſt of the fleſh. And take heed of thoſe peſtilent Principles of Preſumption, which would deceive you by the bare name and ſpecious title of Free Grace; which make Chriſt as Juſtifier only to be the object of Juſtifying Faith, and not Chriſt as your Head, or Husband, or King: which tell you, That you have Fulfilled the Law, and ſatisfied it fully in Chriſt; and ſo need no more then to get the ſence of Pardon, or ſhew your thankfulneſs: which tell you, That if you do but Believe, that you are Pardoned, and ſhall be ſaved, it ſhall be ſo indeed; as if this were the Faith that muſt Juſtifie and Save you. Deceivers may perſwade you, That Chriſt hath done all, and left you nothing to do for your Juſtification or Salvation. But you may eaſily ſee from what I have ſaid, That to Mortifie the Fleſh, to Overcome Satan and the World, and to this End, to ſtand alwaies armed upon our Watch, and Valiantly, and Patiently to fight it out, is a matter of more concernment both to our Aſſurance and Salvation then many do conſider. Indeed it is ſo great a part of our very Baptiſmal Vow, and Covenant of Chriſtianity, that he that performeth it not, is yet no more then a nominal Chriſtian, whatſoever his Parts and Profeſſion may be: and therefore that Chriſt whom they truſted in, and whoſe Free Grace they boaſted of, will Profeſs to theſe Profeſſours, *I never knew you: Depart from me ye that Work iniquity*, Mat. 7.23. *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal: The Lord knoweth who are his: But let him that nameth the Name of Chriſt depart from iniquity*; or elſe he ſhall never finde himſelf among the ſealed, 2 *Tim.*2.19. *Know you not, that to whom you yield your ſelves ſervants to Obey, his ſervants you are to whom ye obey*; whether of *SIN UNTO DEATH, or of OBEDIENCE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNES?* Rom. 6. 16. Not every one that Seeketh, or Runneth, or Fighteth (much leſs that Preſumptuouſly Believeth and Truſteth) but he that *OVERCOMETH* ſhall have the hidden Manna, the white Stone, the New Name, the White Raiment, and Power over the Nations; He ſhall eat of the Tree of Life in the midſt of

Gods Paradise, and shall not be hurt of the second death: He shall be confessed by Christ before his Father, and the Angels; Yea he will make him a Pillar in the Temple of God, and he shall goe out no more: He will write on him the Name of his God, and the Name of the City of his God, [*New Hierusalem*] which cometh down out of Heaven from his God; and his New Name. Yea he will grant him to sit with him in his Throne, as himself *OVERCAME*, and is set down with his Father in his Throne. *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*, Revel. 2.7,11,17,26. & 3.5. 12.21,22.

FINIS.